

DANTE STUDIES

with the Annual Report
of the Dante Society



CXXVII

2009

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Edited by
RICHARD LANSING

Published for
The Dante Society of America, Incorporated
Cambridge, Massachusetts
by
Fordham University Press
Bronx, New York
2009

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Dante Studies, formerly the *Annual Report of the Dante Society*, is published annually. All correspondence regarding membership in the Dante Society should be addressed to Vincent Pollina, Secretary-Treasurer, The Dante Society of America, P.O. Box 1558, Arlington, MA 02474-0023; e-mail: dsa@dantesociety.org. Inquiries about *subscriptions* to the journal and/or *back orders* should be sent to Margaret Noonan, Business Manager, Fordham University Press, University Box L, Bronx, NY 10458-5172; e-mail: mnoonan@fordham.edu. *Submissions* to the journal from members of the Society should be addressed to Richard Lansing, Editor, *Dante Studies*, by e-mail attachment *only* (preferably in Microsoft Word): lansing@brandeis.edu. A style sheet with guidelines for manuscript format and style appears at the end of this issue and can also be found on our Web site at www.dante.society.org | Publications | Dante Studies.

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Library of Congress catalog card number: 15-2183
ISSN 0070-2862

Printed in the United States of America

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Introduction

CHRISTOPHER KLEINHENZ

Most of the essays included in this issue of *Dante Studies* had their source in a symposium on “Dante Alighieri and Medieval Cultural Traditions,” which was held on the campus of the University of Wisconsin, Madison, on March, 16–17, 2007, and which was conceived in part as an anticipatory celebration of my retirement from the university (in August 2007). The four sessions, which took place over two days, were dedicated to the following general themes: “Dante’s Poetic Art,” “Art and Poetry in Dante,” “New Perspectives on Dante and His Poetry,” and “Dante’s *Paradise*.”¹

Celebrations are good and salutary. They also provide a fine occasion to take stock of where we are in our particular discipline, where we have been, and perhaps where we are going. Celebrations provide the ostensible reason for sessions at conferences and for symposia. By celebrating the *gigantes ante nos*, we have the opportunity to revisit their writings and to examine the critical tradition that has sprung up around them.² For Dante and the other two crowns of the Trecento—Petrarch and Boccaccio—we have had many occasions to celebrate in recent years,³ but we might ask whether it is possible to have too much of a good thing. Scholars often fixate on anniversary years, and virtually every year—indeed, every month and every day—could, with a little investigation and imagination, become an excuse for a symposium, conference, workshop, or seminar.

As an Italian medievalist, I have personally witnessed—and survived—several big centenary years: 1965 (Dante’s birth), 1974 (Petrarch’s death), 1975 (Boccaccio’s death), 1990 (Beatrice’s death), 2000 (Dante’s journey through the afterlife), and 2004 (Petrarch’s birth). I hope to survive long enough to see both 2013 (Boccaccio’s birth) and 2021 (Dante’s death).

Was there anything special about the year 2007 in terms of Dante's life and works that we should have been celebrating? Although we needed no justification for a symposium on Dante, we could have said that we were celebrating the 700th anniversary of the year in which Dante stopped writing the *Convivio* to begin the composition of the *Commedia*. And for many, that was sufficient cause for jubilation.

Each anniversary year brings with it a tremendous outpouring of scholarship. In fact, we generally know when a special celebration has taken place, for the volume of publications increases exponentially, and this sudden surge of interest has scholarly repercussions in subsequent years. For Dante the year 1965—the 700th anniversary of his birth—was a particularly rich one, and the following years were equally productive. Indeed, we have never really come down from this critical high-water mark, for more and more is being published on the Florentine poet.⁴

And so, in March of 2007, we embarked on a time-honored academic tradition, a symposium on Dante: “Dante Alighieri and Medieval Cultural Traditions.” The idea behind the symposium was to examine the dynamic interaction between Dante and various cultural traditions in which he was working in order to arrive at a better understanding of the processes of influence and innovation that were at work in the composition of the *Divine Comedy*. The following pages contain some of the fruits of that symposium.

University of Wisconsin–Madison
Madison, Wisconsin

NOTES

I would like to acknowledge the Anonymous Fund and the Department of French and Italian of the University of Wisconsin–Madison for their generous financial support of this symposium. Thanks also go to Associate Dean Magdalena Hauner for her encouragement, to Mary Noles for her tireless efforts toward the realization of this event, and to my many colleagues and students in the department for their participation in the symposium. A particular debt of gratitude goes to Ernesto Livorni, Kristin Phillips-Court, and Patrick Rumble for presiding over the various sessions.

1. The papers presented in each session were, respectively: 1. Richard Lansing, “The Pageantry of Dante's Verse,” and Ronald Martinez, “‘L'amoroso canto': The Lyric and the Liturgy in Dante's *Purgatorio*”; 2. Christopher Livanos, “Dante's Monsters: Nature and Evil in the *Comedy*,” Fabian Alfie, “*Il duro camo*: Poetics and Politics in *Purgatorio* XIV,” and H. Wayne Storey, “Painting over Dante”; 3. Teodolinda Barolini, “Dante and Medieval Italian Studies: Thoughts for the Future,” and Giuseppe Mazzotta, “New Beginnings”; 4. Susan Noakes, “Franciscan Economic Discourse in

Dante's *Paradiso*, X–XIII: The Semantics of 'Valor,'" and Steven Botterill, "Rethinking Dante's Mysticism."

2. In an earlier essay, "Studies on Medieval Italian Literature in North America: Past, Present and Future" (*Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 105.1 [January, 2006], 245–56), I provided an overview of the critical literature on early Italian literature, especially on Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio.

3. Over the past quarter of a century conferences in the general area of Dante studies have been organized at, for example, Hunter College (1983), SUNY–Stony Brook (1988), the University of Notre Dame (1993), St. John's College, Cambridge (1994), Princeton University (1994), and Columbia University (2000); all of these led to the publication of the proceedings. The Princeton conference marked the first in a series, known as the International Dante Seminar. The published proceedings of these conferences are, in the order presented: *The Divine Comedy and the Encyclopedia of Arts and Sciences: Acta of the International Dante Symposium, 13–16 November 1983*, ed. Giuseppe Di Scipio and Aldo Scaglione (Amsterdam: Benjamins, 1988); *Dante Now: Current Trends in Dante Studies*, ed. Theodore J. Cachey Jr. (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1995); *Dante: Summa Medievals: Proceedings of the Symposium of the Center for Italian Studies, SUNY Stony Brook*, ed. Charles Franco and Leslie Morgan (Stony Brook, N.Y.: Forum Italicum, 1995); *The "Fiore" in Context: Dante, France, Tuscany*, ed. Zygmunt G. Baranski and Patrick Boyde (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1997); *Seminario Dantesco Internazionale. International Dante Seminar: 1, Atti del primo convegno tenutosi al Chauncey Conference Center, Princeton, 21–23 ottobre 1994*, ed. Zygmunt G. Baranski (Florence: Le Lettere, 1997); and *Dante and the New Millennium*, ed. Teodolinda Barolini and H. Wayne Storey (Bronx, N.Y.: Fordham University Press, 2003). While not an exhaustive list, it does provide some idea of the intense scholarly activity in the general area of Dante studies.

4. One measure of this tremendous growth may be observed in the two Dante bibliographies compiled by the late Enzo Esposito. The first, *Gli studi danteschi dal 1950 al 1964* (Rome: Centro Editoriale Internazionale, 1965), lists some 2,679 individual items, but the second, *Bibliografia analitica degli scritti su Dante 1950–1970*, 4 vols. (Florence: Olschki, 1990), includes 9,180 items, i.e., more than three times the earlier total, but with only six additional years covered. This demonstrates the great power of a centenary celebration (in 1965) to spawn critical contributions.

“Il duro camo”: Poetics and Politics in *Purgatorio* 14

FABIAN ALFIE

The genesis of this study lies in the observation that verse 118 of *Purgatorio* 14—“Ben faranno i Pagan, da che ’l demonio / lor sen girà”—bears a certain similarity to the incipit of one of the sonnets in Dante’s insulting *tenzone* with Forese Donati, “Ben ti faranno il nodo Salamone / Bicci novello, e petti delle starne.”¹ The verses of the two poems share not only their opening clauses, which are nearly identical (“Ben faranno”; “Ben ti faranno”), but also the stressed syllables of their rhyme words (“demonio”; “Salamone”). Given the resemblance of the line from *Purgatorio* to that of the *tenzone*, it seems unlikely that Dante did not have his youthful correspondence in mind as he composed his masterpiece. Furthermore, verse 118 does not stand in isolation, for other features of *Purgatorio* 14 recall aspects of the vituperative exchange with Forese Donati: the poet describes the Arno as “la maladetta e sventurata fossa” (14.51), while Forese had also employed the plural “fosse” as a rhyme word in his first sonnet of the exchange (v. 8); later in the canto, the penitent Guido del Duca describes his divinely inspired prophecy as an act of untying, “ciò che vero spirto mi disnoda” (14.57), and the concept of vice as a knotted snare, in particular the mysterious expression “Solomon’s knot,” is central to the mutual denigration of both *tenzonanti*. The question addressed by this study, then, is not simply that of identifying a literary reminiscence in Dante’s magnum opus, yet another case of Dante referring back to his previous literary output, to say nothing of the problematic concept of palinode (Ascoli, 161). Rather, I will try to address the question of why the great author might have called to mind one of the sonnets derisive of Forese Donati in the comments of Guido del Duca

on the terrace of envy. Therefore, I offer a reading of *Purgatorio* 14 from a perspective that considers the historical and sociopolitical concerns raised by—and the literary issues raised with—Dante's *tenzone* with Forese Donati.

Let me be clear at the outset that my reading may give the mistaken impression of *Purgatorio* 14 as strictly about the topics and language of the correspondence between Dante and Forese. Nothing could be further from the truth. Dante's *Commedia* is far too complex to allow for such a univocal interpretation; each canto plays multiple roles in the broad context of the work and therefore cannot be reduced to a simple signification. By emphasizing one item from the canto as an organizing feature for its analysis, this article, of necessity, stresses certain characteristics of *Purgatorio* 14 over others, which are also worthy of study.² Yet despite the potential drawbacks of focusing on the echoes of the *tenzone* with Forese Donati, I believe that my approach clarifies much of the enigmatic fourteenth canto of *Purgatorio*.

As many readers of the *Commedia* will agree, the episode is highly unusual: the principal speaker is not one of the main characters (e.g., Dante, Virgil, Beatrice) but a minor secondary one, Guido del Duca, and his discourses seemingly have little to do with the primary action of the poem. As Dante finishes his conversation with Sapia at the end of Canto 13, two souls, Guido and Rinieri de' Calboli, wonder aloud about his presence on the mountain. Dante identifies himself to them only as someone born on the banks of that waterway which originates in Falterona. Rinieri wonders why Dante conceals from them the very name of the Arno, leading Guido to inveigh against the river and the inhabitants of its valley; he then foresees the destruction of the Florentine Whites at the hands of Rinieri's nephew, Fulcieri de' Calboli. Guido finally names himself and his companion before decrying at length the current degeneration of the noble families of the Romagna. Weeping, he asks the travelers to depart, and as Virgil and Dante walk away, they hear the examples of envy punished. A recurrent term in the scholarship on the canto is that of "digression" (e.g., Barberi-Squarotti, 361; Girardi, 248), and as my brief synopsis of the passage demonstrates, such characterization does not appear inaccurate. Some critics imply the seemingly fragmentary nature of the canto (e.g., Grana, 32; Girardi, 243–244), as if it consisted of little more than a hodgepodge of components that did not belong elsewhere in the work. By employing the recollection of the *tenzone* with Forese

Donati as a key to the canto, however, I hope to demonstrate its complete internal consistency. Indeed, I assert that it contains no digressions at all: the various discourses are entirely consonant with the themes underlying the canto. I contend that the poet evokes the memory of the lyric exchange precisely because it shares those very same themes and thus it underscores their presence in *Purgatorio* 14. The intertextuality acts as a signpost, as it were, that indicates the proper interpretation of the canto.

Before entering into the reading of *Purgatorio* 14, it will be necessary to discuss Dante's poetic correspondence with Forese in terms of its genre classification and its specific signification. The correspondence is no mere youthful indiscretion, as it has sometimes been described (e.g., del Lungo, 441). Composed prior to 1296 (Davidsohn, IV, 40), Dante's *tenzone* with Forese lies within the mainstream of medieval poetry the exchange with Donati has a firm basis in the literary theory of the Middle Ages. For centuries before the births of Dante and Forese, medieval literary theorists categorized all literature as a subset of ethics because it either praised the virtuous (tragedy) or castigated the sinful (comedy) (Allen, *The Ethical Poetic*, 6–20). It is the latter category that interests us here. As Charles A. Knight observes about satires—although his comment applies equally well to comedies—"Religion legitimates, indeed blesses, satire's worldly pessimism" (140). Over time, the moral basis to literature as either praise or blame became rather commonplace (Barański, "Tres enim sunt," 43). For instance, in the writings attributed to Terence that circulated during the fourteenth century, the reprobation and correction of faults constituted a key characteristic of the definition of comedy (Villa, 222). In short, literary theorists of the Middle Ages fused the binomial genre classification of tragedy and comedy with the diametrically opposed ethical functions of praise and blame. The literature of reprehension, then, did not merely express the personal animus of the writers but was situated in the broader framework of enforcing traditional morality and socially accepted behaviors. The moral purpose of comic literature as the castigation of vice clearly validated the vernacular poetics of insult, including the *tenzone* between Dante and Forese.

Historically speaking, at the same time that the definition of comedy came to include the admonition of the wicked, the classical definition of satire as the reprobation of vices persisted among many writers (Miller, 80–81). In his translation of Averroës, Hermann the German ascribed to the genre of comedy the moral function classically served by satire and

thereby contributed to the cultural confusion between the two definitions (Allen, "Hermann the German," 68). The definition of one genre likewise blended with the other in regard to style: unlike tragedies, comedies were allowed complete linguistic freedom in their subject matter and lexicon, including the use of obscenities and phonologically dissonant terms (Schiaffini, 352); similarly, theorists placed no stylistic restrictions on satires (Van Rooy, 5). In their attempt to characterize the genre, various thinkers proposed different etymological explanations for the word *satire*: from *satyr*, a creature that was nude just as satires were nude, that is, blunt in their language; to *saturna*, the sacrificial plate filled with offerings, just as satires were replete with vices and crass vocabulary (Reynolds, 129–32). As Suzanne Reynolds demonstrates, for some writers of the Middle Ages, satires needed to be composed in the lowest, most humble linguistic register, while comedy required a middling style. Other thinkers simply omitted satire from consideration, describing comedy as the poetics of blame, and associating comic writings with both the low and middle styles (132). Due to the overlap in definitions during the age, both comedies and satires could employ terminology barred from the high style owing to phonic qualities, references to the body and bodily functions, or a general unseemliness (Schiaffini, 284–85). Indeed, building on Averroës's concepts, Conrad of Hirsau asserted that the poetics of ugliness (*feditas*) and of the obscene (*obscenitas*), which had characterized comedy, now also characterized satire (D'Alfonso, 19–20). Yet it is not necessary to determine whether Dante and Forese considered their sonnets satires or comedies per se. As defined, both genres entailed the use of the low style and had the purpose of castigating vice.

Since invective played a social role of correcting faults, during the Middle Ages it was frequently equated with political literature (Barański, "Sordellus," 24). The vices decried in the lyrics by Dante and Forese appear at first sight to be of a strictly personal nature, however; on the surface, the sonnets of the *tenzone* seem dedicated only to the pettiest insults of interest to few beyond the two antagonists. In probably the first poem of the exchange, "Chi udisse tossir la mal fatata," for instance, Dante assails Forese's sexual inadequacy and destitution. The poet describes Forese's wife, Nella, as suffering from a hacking cough. Thanks to the poverty of the Donati household (v. 11), she suffers extreme cold even in mid-August (v. 5), and it does not help her to sleep fully clothed (v. 7). Dante then crafts a pun to suggest that her alidity is due to the

sexual inattention of her husband, claiming that her nighttime coverings are insufficient: "merzè del copertoio c'ha cortonese" (v. 8). We moderns tend to focus on the sexual connotations of that verse and hence interpret the exchange as scabrous and trivial. In their edition of Dante's verse, Gianfranco Contini and Domenico De Robertis argue that Dante uses the provenance of the sheets to imply that Forese has a small penis ("cortonese") (369). Yet the sexual connotation of the term "cortonese" should not overshadow its explicit denotation: the coverlet comes from Cortona, and by mentioning the city, Dante may imply far more with the lyric than simply Forese's sexual impotence. Cortona, along with the lands around Arezzo, figured among the possessions of the Counts Guidi (Davidsohn, II, 108). The poet stresses the Ghibelline family not only by placing the adjective "cortonese" in high relief as the last rhyme of the octave but also by mentioning the Counts Guidi a second time in the sonnet. He portrays Nella's mother, who proclaims in the final verse that, but for dried figs, she could have married her to none other Count Guido (v. 14). Since the Counts Guidi had the reputation of extreme wealth,³ their presence throughout the sonnet may simply act as a foil to Forese's poverty. Yet a political interpretation of the poem should not be ruled out. The Donati were proud Guelphs and had, according to legend, a central role in the Florentine split between the two parties. If, as Dante implies, Nella had associations with the Ghibelline Counts Guidi—for example, by receiving the gift of a coverlet, if not actually receiving one of them in her bed—it would certainly have caused a rift in Forese's household. In other words, in his poem Dante's apparently personal insults may also belie a greater issue in the Florentine commune, namely, the political factionalism of late thirteenth-century Tuscany.

In their correspondence each participant follows a similar praxis of using expansive insults, whereby the personal denigration gives way to a broader commentary on their respective positions in society. In "L'altra notte mi venn' una tosse" Forese claims that he encountered the ghost of Dante's father, Alighiero Bellincione, bound by Solomon's knot (vv. 8–10). Although the expression is not entirely clear, Solomon's knot seemingly indicated one person's subjugation to another. Thus Forese implies the subservience of Alighiero to himself, and by extension he derides the aristocratic pretensions of the Alighieri family. Forese writes in his second sonnet, "Va' rivesti San Gal prima che dichi," that the Alighieri clan suffers from greater financial woes than those of the Donati.

He asserts that Dante will need to work to save his sister Gaetana and half-brother Francesco as well as to avoid personally the fate of his uncle Belluzzo: “se Dio ti salvi la Tana e ’l Francesco, / che col Belluzzo tu non stia in brigata” (vv. 10–11). Despite the social changes occurring due to the flourishing market economy, historian Philip Jones writes, the urban nobility maintained the prejudice toward labor as demeaning to an aristocrat (309–16). Hence Forese’s charge that Dante will need to find employment strikes at the very heart of Alighieri’s identity as a nobleman. Regardless of Dante’s efforts, Forese continues, he anticipates that Dante will take his place alongside Alighiero Bellincione, who has already been publicly reduced to his underclothes: “e già mi par vedere stare a desco, / ed in terzo, Alighier co.la farsata” (vv. 13–14). In his last sonnet, “Ben so che fosti figliuol d’Alighieri,” Forese proclaims his certainty in Dante’s parentage because, like the rest of his relatives, Dante does not avenge himself on enemies. The ethos of the urban nobility of the Italian communes stressed the importance of the vendetta (Larner, 152); in essence, by speaking of Dante’s failure to take revenge, Forese wonders aloud whether Dante and his kin truly are aristocrats in spirit if not in fact.⁴ Throughout his three sonnets, therefore, Forese does not simply insult Dante; rather, he treats Dante as the synecdoche for the entire Alighieri family. Forese’s slanders repeatedly gravitate around the question of the nobility of the Alighieri.

Perhaps more than in any of the other sonnets, in his final poem of the correspondence Dante masterfully links together several seemingly disparate charges against Forese. He opens the sonnet by calling into question Donati’s paternity, addressing him as “Bicci novel, figliuol di non so cui.” He then cites Forese’s extreme gluttony as the cause for his thievery (vv. 3–8). In the tercets, however, Dante broadens his perspective to include other members of the Donati family. He first portrays Forese’s father, Simone Donati, abed, fearful that his son will be apprehended red handed: “E tal giace per lui nel letto tristo, / per tema non sia preso a lo ’mbolare, / che gli apartien quanto Giosep a Cristo” (vv. 9–11). Through the blasphemous reference to Christ and Saint Joseph, Dante repeats the charge of illegitimacy of the incipit verse, again seemingly relating it to Forese’s larceny. Perhaps the famous narrative about Simone Donati and Gianni Schicchi underlies the poet’s connection between Forese’s false paternity and his patrimony. Gianni Schicchi and Simone, it will be recalled, worked together to acquire falsely the inheritance of Buoso

Donati by impersonating the latter individual and falsifying his testament after his death. By participating in that crime, Simone seemingly made bastards of his sons by making them heirs to another man. By interrupting the proper distribution of goods, Simone broke his own bloodline. Whether or not Dante positions the legend of Gianni Schicchi as a sub-text, the poet then spells out openly in his sonnet that the illicit possessions of the Donati family have caused the degeneration of the clan; indeed, he writes, employing a key term of the ideology of aristocracy (Jones, 313), their goods have tainted their very blood ("sangue"): "Di Bicci e de' fratei posso contare / che, per lo sangue lor, del mal acquisto / sann' a lor donne buon' cognati stare" (vv. 12–14). By means of leveling multiple insults, Dante suggests that the criminal actions of all the Donati—and not just Forese—contradict their social standing as nobles.

Gennaro Savarese claims that in the *tenzone* Dante casts Forese as a symbol of decadent Florence (7), but each poet treats the other as metonymic of their respective families. As we have seen, both poets question the true nobility of the other's family. Each writer targets the other personally but in the end their correspondence constitutes the indictment of an entire class, the urban aristocracy of the Italian communes during the latter half of the thirteenth century. During the 1280s and 1290s, the very same decades in which Dante and Forese composed their *tenzone*, the Florentine government was working to rein in its unruly magnates. The commune forced a number of families, including the Donati, to post a monetary bond that would be forfeit in the case of serious infractions of the law (Becker, 95). In the early 1290s the priorate of Giano della Bella reinvigorated the anti-magnate climate by promulgating the Ordinances of Justice (Schevill, 158–59). Historians cannot speak of rigid distinctions among aristocrat, magnate, and *popolano* (Salvemini, 9–11), yet in the Florentine commune the ethos of nobility remained in full force (Larner, 171). The legal difficulties facing the urban elites and the social problems they caused gave rise to a debate about the very nature of nobility. Indeed, the concept of nobility was highly contested during the decades in question throughout Italy (Jones, 224). Historian Carol Lansing poses the question facing politically minded thinkers of the age: "If nobles acted not as society's protectors but rather as a threat to public order then in what sense could they be considered noble?" (212) The controversy about nobility centered on the essence of aristocracy, and in particular focused on the relationship between inherited honors and true moral character

(Lansing, 212–16). Dante's poetic correspondence with Forese, therefore, takes on historical relevance in the light of the changing attitudes toward the nobility. It repeatedly highlights the gulf between the urban aristocracy as idealized and as it truly existed during the last decades of the Duecento.

While the lyric correspondence communicates specific accusations about the misconduct of the two specific individuals, their families and class, it does not constitute Dante's only statement about the nature of nobility. On the contrary, he participates in the cultural debate in writings as diverse as his lyric poetry, the *Monarchia*, and portions of the *Commedia* (e.g., *Paradiso* 30). As Umberto Carpi demonstrates, Dante's views on the subject continually evolved throughout his lifetime and, in particular, during the last two decades of the Duecento ("Il fiorino," 52). Therefore, we must avoid the temptation to assume that Dante's beliefs on nobility were fixed and concrete.

Most of Book 4 of the *Convivio*, which comments on the *canzone* "Le dolci rime d'amor ch'i' solia," deals with the question of nobility in a highly systematic manner. Composed roughly a decade after Forese's death (ca. 1304–7), the *Convivio* spells out more clearly than elsewhere Dante's opinions about aristocracy. In the debate about the aristocracy, a number of key thinkers discussed the insufficiency of Aristotle's two criteria for nobility, namely ancient possessions and virtue inherited from ancestors (Lansing, 213–16). In the fourth book of the *Convivio*, Dante expresses his opinion that nobility is derived only from virtue and not at all from possessions (Simonelli, 56). He puts the matter quite bluntly in his *canzone*: "È gentilezza ovunqu'è virtute" (v. 101). As he elaborates in the prose commentary, nobility does not consist merely of ethics, but of the potential for virtue: "ogni sopra detta virtude, singularmente o ver generalmente presa, proceda da nobilitade sì come effetto da sua cagione" (4.18.2). Mario Trovato explains that in the *Convivio* Dante considers goodness as the potentiality for perfection inherent to every created species (81). Nobility, Dante claims, is a divinely acquired attribute that allows for the realization of that goodness (4.1.7). It is, he avers, the innate potential of rare individuals for fulfilling the fundamental nature of humankind.

Since nobility as Dante defines it is a God-given trait scattered throughout all strata of society, he stresses that riches and inherited status have little to do with it (4.10.7). On the contrary, Dante writes, wealth is

vile, and nobility naturally opposes vile things: "Dare non la [= la nobiltà] possono [le ricchezze], con ciò sia cosa che naturalmente siano vili, e per la viltade per degenerazione, la quale a la nobilitade s'opponne" (4.7.10). Frequently, Dante states, the wealthy acquire their possessions through evil actions or through luck, in a manner not at all commensurate with their merits:

. . . ché più volte a li malvagi che a li buoni le celate ricchezze, che si truovano o che si ritruovano, si rappresentano; e questo si è manifesto, che non ha mestiere di pruova. Veramente io vidi lo luogo, ne le coste d'un monte che si chiama Falterona, in Toscana, dove lo più vile villano di tutta la contrada, zappando, più di uno staio di santalene d'argento finissimo vi trovò, che forse più di dumilia anni l'aveano aspettato. (4.11.8)

In this passage, Dante does not elaborate on the narrative of the peasant stumbling on a treasure in Falterona. Instead, he seemingly treats it as a tale familiar to his readers, suggesting that it was employed in the cultural discussions about wealth and nobility. He employs it in the fourth book of the *Convivio* to cast doubts about the ennobling effects of money: even after finding the buried treasure, Dante insinuates, the farmer is no nobler than he was before. Yet, as understood from the broader discussion, the peasant's nobility—or lack thereof—does not have to do with his social class per se, but with his individual nature. Elsewhere, Dante provides the counterexample of Gherardo da Camino, arguing that even if he were the descendant of the lowest peasant, no one would call him vile:

Pognamo che Gherardo da Camino fosse stato nipote del più vile villano che mai bevesse del Sile o del Cagnano, e la oblivione ancora non fosse del suo avolo venuta: chi sarà oso di dire che Gherardo da Camino fosse vile uomo? (4.14.12)

Therefore, Dante concludes, unlike wealth, nobility—that divine spark to embody human potential—cannot be transmitted genetically through family lines. He goes so far as to criticize people who proclaim their noble status only as a birthright:

Sì che non dica quelli de li Uberti di Fiorenza, né quelli de li Visconti da Melano: "perch' io sono di cotale schiatta, io sono nobile"; ché 'l divino seme non cade in ischiatta, cioè in stirpe, ma cade ne le singolari persone, e sì come sotto si proverà, la stirpe non fa le singolari persone nobili, ma le singolari persone fanno nobile la stirpe. (4.20.5)

In short, the nobility of a great ancestor does not necessarily confer nobility to the descendants. As Roberto Bizzocchi observes, for Dante, nobility is a quality of an individual not a house (202). Furthermore, Dante chastises the offspring of virtuous noble individuals who do not behave ethically: “E così quelli che dal padre o d’alcuno suo maggiore buono è disceso ed è malvagio, non solamente è vile ma vilissimo, e degno d’ogni dispetto e vituperio più che altro villano” (4.7.9). That a villainous person is the child of a great individual only brings more opprobrium on his or her evil nature.⁵ Throughout the fourth book of the *Convivio*, Dante fully expounds upon his belief that inner virtue, not wealth or aristocratic honors, constitutes the true nature of nobility. In the *Monarchia*, Dante reiterates his belief that nobility is synonymous with virtue (2.3.4), but he adds one further element to his views on nobility: nobility confers the right to rule over others (“nobilissimo populo convenit omnibus aliis preferri,” 2.3.2). It is important to understand the opinions expressed about nobility in his political writings, which expand on the insults found in his *tenzone* with Forese Donati, because, as we shall see, they also represent the ideological underpinnings of the entire episode in *Purgatorio* 14.

From the outset, the poet positions *Purgatorio* 14 as part of the fourteenth-century tradition of political invective.⁶ The episode begins on the terrace of envy when two unidentified souls, dressed in hair shirts and with their eyes sewn shut with iron thread, speak to each another:

“Chi è costui che ’l nostro monte cerchia
prima che morte li abbia dato il volo,
e apre li occhi a sua voglia e coverchia?”

“Non so chi sia, ma so che non è solo:
domandal tu che più li t’avvicini,
e dolcemente, sì che parli, acco’lo.”

(*Purg.* 14.1–6)

Francesco Biondolillo observes that the episode begins in *medias res*, following immediately after the action of the previous canto (5). Giuseppe A. Camerino further clarifies that the discourse actually interrupts the pilgrim’s conversation with Sapia (99). Thus by opening the canto with the penitents’ discussion, the poet decenters the pilgrim, focusing attention instead on the other individuals whose personalities, as shown below, characterize the entire canto. Moreover, the author imitates with

immediacy the natural speech of the two noblemen (Barberi-Squarotti, 333). The twelfth-century theorist Geoffrey of Vinsauf, for example, described the comic style in terms of plain speech: "Res comica namque recusa / Arte laboratos sermones: sola requirit / Plana . . ." (vv. 1890–92). Yet direct discourse does not constitute the prime trait of the traditional comic style in this passage. When Guido poses the question of Dante's identity, he initiates the entire canto with the loaded term *chi*, which appears frequently in the incipit verses of numerous derisive poems of the age, including Dante's own "Chi udisse tossir la mal fatata" (De Robertis, "Ancora della tenzone," 42). Simply by beginning the canto with Guido del Duca's query and Rinieri de' Calboli's response, therefore, the poet marks a change in tone from that of the preceding canto.

Underscoring the impression given by the penitents' conversation, the utterances of Guido and Rinieri in the first two tercets adhere to the comic style as prescribed in medieval literary treatises. Phonologically speaking, the opening line is harsh, dominated as it is by voiceless consonants, in particular /k/, /č/ and the cluster /st/: "*Chi è costui che 'l nostro monte cerchia.*" The first line of Rinieri's response (v. 4), in which aspirated /s/ and /k/ predominate, creates a similar effect: "Non so *chi* sia ma so *che* non è solo." As Dante writes in the *De vulgari eloquentia* (about 1303–5), the high poetic style should avoid certain phonic traits, such as voiceless consonants and geminate *s* and *z*, as well as doubled liquids (2.7.3–5); however, such sounds are presumably available to writers of comedies. Additionally, the incipit verse ends with a consonantal rhyme word (-ERCHIA), which again is a typical characteristic of the comic style (Russo, 126–28). In order to produce an echo with *cerchia*, he must employ the word *coverchia* with the unusual signification of "to close."⁷ Comparable stylistic traits, it should be noted, can be located throughout the entire canto. In fact, Vincenzo Placella relates that *Purgatorio* 14 is dominated by hendecasyllables with the stress on the seventh syllable, a characteristic that underscores the harshness of the rhymes and the sounds typical of the comic style (306). From the very beginning the poet uses poetic techniques and selects his terminology to establish in the readers the expectation that the canto will consist of invectives.

The poet quickly fulfills the readers' expectations. In response to their curiosity about him, Dante identifies himself only circuitously, engaging

in the first instance of what Gianni Grana calls the periphrastic style of the canto (28):

E io: "Per mezza Toscana si spazia
un fiumicel che nasce in Falterona,
e cento miglia di corso nol sazia.
Di sovr' esso rech' io questa persona:
dirvi ch'i' sia, saria parlare indarno,
ché 'l nome mio ancor molto non sona."
(*Purg.* 14.16–21)

Robin Kirkpatrick explicates the pilgrim's hesitation to name himself as stemming from the prohibition to speak of oneself found in the first book of the *Convivio* (78). While Kirkpatrick's observation has merit, it does not entirely explain why Dante demurs in this instance; he speaks candidly about himself elsewhere throughout the *Commedia*. Tommaso Casini interprets Dante's reticence as a reflection of his humility (6), while Giuseppe A. Camerino reads it in relation to the author's biography, since in 1300 he had fame only as a love poet (103). As with Kirkpatrick's observation, these explanations are neither wrong nor fully correct. In the discussion below, another poetic rationale for the poet's approach will become apparent. For now, it is sufficient to note simply that this reticence regarding his identity is the second instance in this canto of Dante taking the focus off himself.

Guido del Duca immediately recognizes the Arno from Dante's description, and Rinieri de' Calboli speculates about the pilgrim's reluctance even to mention its name:

"Se ben lo 'ntendimento tuo accarno
con lo 'ntelletto" allora mi rispuose
quei che diceva pria, "tu parli d'Arno."
E l'altro disse lui: "Perché nascose
questi il vocabol di quella rivera
pur com' uom fa de l'orribili cose?"
(*Purg.* 14.22–27)

By comparing Dante's reference to the Arno to the hesitation to speak of "horrible things," Rinieri reveals the pilgrim's circumlocution to be little more than a euphemism. As Rinieri casts it, Dante shuns the river's name as someone who avoids offensive subject matter. In so doing, the poet

subtly introduces to the canto the stylistic question of the literary use of obscenities.⁸ The fourteenth-century commentator Benvenuto da Imola glosses the passage more fully, relating it to other similar instances in the *Commedia*:

Nam res inhonestae et infames solent velari sub alia forma verborum; sicut poeta noster pulcre et honeste facit Inferni capitulo XXV, ubi volens nominare virile membrum, dicit: lo membro che l'uomo cela; et infra XXVI [sic] capitulo Purgatorii, volens dicere quod sperma descendit ad testiculos, dicit: scende ov'è più bello tacer che dire; et ita de multis (on *Purgatorio* XIV: 25–30).⁹

As Benvenuto stresses through the other citations, Dante's unwillingness to mention the Arno puts it in the company of other obscenities not to be discussed publicly. Importantly, Benvenuto quotes the discussion of the generation of sperm in the testicles from *Purgatorio* 25. In that instance, the poet's refusal to treat such matters also seems derived from a stylistic consideration ("più bello / tacer," 25.43–44).¹⁰ As discussed previously, unlike the tragic style, which has restrictions placed upon it, the comic style, including several passages in the *Commedia* itself, permits the direct denotation of objectionable matters through obscene language. The pilgrim's periphrastic speech highlights the stylistic difference between him and Guido. In the face of Dante's delicate circumlocutions in *Purgatorio* 14, Guido bluntly mentions distasteful things in service of chastising the wicked. Consequently, one explanation of Dante's circuitous expressions in *Purgatorio* 14 may be to reduce the comic tone in the pilgrim's utterances. The diminished comicality may serve to create a stylistic contrast with Guido del Duca's invective, amplifying the bitter tone of his satire. The poet's consistent deemphasizing of the pilgrim throughout this canto may act to focus the reader instead on Guido del Duca and on his reprehension of the modern-day nobles. In fact, Guido's addresses to the pilgrim are themselves highly respectful (*Purg.* 14.10–15, 77–81) and also contrast sharply with his satiric speeches.

In answering Rinieri's question, Guido del Duca immediately launches into his diatribe against the Arno and its inhabitants. He agrees with Dante's rationale that, due to its horribleness, the very word "Arno" should be obliterated:

E l'ombra che di ciò domandata era
si sdebitò così: "Non so; ma degno
ben è che 'l nome di tal valle pera."
(*Purg.* 14.28–30)

Through the syntactical inversion, the poet positions “ben” at the start of verse 30, much like the incipit verses of two of the sonnets of the *tenzone* with Forese Donati (“*Ben ti faranno il nodo Salamone*” and “*Ben so che fosti figliuol d’Alighieri*”). By constructing the verse in such a manner, the poet prepares for the coming reference later in the canto. While scholars speak of the invective against the Arno as a digression (e.g., Girardi, 257), from a stylistic perspective its presence in *Purgatorio* 14 comes as little surprise. In the preceding verses, Guido had described his comprehension of Dante’s reference to the waterway with the verb “accarno” (14.22). A violent term, it literally denotes the action of an animal, such as a dog, sinking its teeth into its prey, and it foreshadows the aggression Guido expresses toward the river and its inhabitants. Franco Suitner, in his book-length study of medieval vituperation, provides further explanation of Guido’s unusual verb. Suitner notes that metaphors of biting or piercing dominate the critical discourse about literary reprehension (17). By having Guido express his understanding in this way, the poet already introduced an element suggestive of satire. Such has been Dante’s approach all along. Through the repeated use of poetic characteristics and critical language indicative of the comic style, the poet anticipates the vituperation of the people of the Arno, tonally harmonizing it with the rest of the canto.

Nor does the presence of the invective against the Arno appear in the fourteenth canto of *Purgatorio* fortuitously. Rather, a parallel exists between *Purgatorio* 14 and *Inferno* 14 (Sermonetti, 258), and the similarity between the two cantos sheds light on the discussion at hand. Just as the pilgrim brings up the source of the Arno and Guido del Duca will expound upon its course, in *Inferno* 14 Virgil discusses the origins of the rivers of hell. A giant statue, the old man of Crete, rests within the mountain of Ida, Virgil recounts, and has a head of gold, chest and arms of silver, a torso of bronze, legs of iron, and its right foot, upon which it rests more weight, made of terracotta; it is split up to the head, and its tears, which seep out of the crack, pool beneath it and form the infernal rivers (*Inferno* 14.94–120). While interpretations of the old man of Crete may differ, it is generally regarded as a symbol of human degeneration since it recalls the Ovidian ages of gold, silver, bronze, and iron (Reggio, 902). Virgil’s explanation of the rivers in hell entails the notion of historical moral decline of humanity from its creation through the modern age. The

discussion of the Arno in *Purgatorio* 14, as we shall see, contains the analogous conception that each place the Arno flows past is worse than the previous. By structurally situating Guido del Duca's diatribe so that it recalls the old man of Crete in *Inferno* 14, the poet positions the Arno as also symbolizing some form of human degeneracy.

Dante provides clues not only to the general metaphor of the Tuscan river but also to its specific symbolic meaning. Previously, the pilgrim mentioned only its source, but in that verse the poet drew attention to Falterona by placing it in the rhyming position (*Purg.* 14.17). It is not hard to understand the emphasis Dante puts on this particular location; it is, of course, the very same locale mentioned in the *Convivio* where the ignoble farmer had stumbled across the buried treasure. If, as suggested above, it was a commonplace narrative in the cultural discourse about wealth, then the poet might have reasonably expected many of his readers to take note of it in *Purgatorio* 14. The pilgrim also added other echoes of his opinions about aristocracy in the canto by describing the river as being born there ("nasce," *Purg.* 14.17), but that, even after one hundred miles, it is not sated ("nol sazia," *Purg.* 14.18). Like an aristocrat, it is born to luxury but greedily hungers for more. In his discussion of the aristocracy in the *Convivio*, Dante argues only that money had nothing to do with true nobility. In *Purgatorio* 14 he seems to imply that the wealth of the aristocrats actually assists in their moral decay, a concept he first establishes when he describes the Arno as unsated.

When Guido begins his invective, he too describes the waterway using language that also calls to mind Dante's writings about nobility:

. . . ché dal principio suo, ov' è sì pregno
l'alpestro monte ond' è tronco Peloro,
che 'n pochi luoghi passa oltre quel segno,
 infin là 've si rende per ristoro
di quel che 'l ciel della marina asciuga
ond' hanno i fiumi ciò che va con loro,
 vertù così per nimica si fuga
da tutti come biscia, o per sventura
del luogo, o per mal uso che li fruga.

(*Purg.* 14.31–39)

As Umberto Carpi notes, by describing the descent of the Arno, Dante provides a view of Tuscany not from the perspective of Florence but from

that of the Apennines (“Fra Tuscia,” 471). The river begins in the pregnant mountain (“pregno / l’alpestro monte,” *Purg.* 14.31–32), underscoring the notion of birth established by the pilgrim. That mount, furthermore, is infrequently surpassed in height: “che ’n pochi luoghi passa oltre quel segno” (*Purg.* 14.33). In *Paradiso* 26 the poet describes the sin of Adam and Eve in comparable terms (“trapassar del segno,” 115–17). It would seem that the recollection of Adam’s Fall is deliberate in *Purgatorio* 14 because Guido proclaims that virtue flees from the Arno as if from a serpent (37–38). The latter statement is crucial because, aside from its Edenic reminiscences, it utilizes a key word that assists greatly in interpreting the satire of the Arno. As seen above, the potential for virtue constitutes the fundamental characteristic in Dante’s conception of nobility; but virtue flees from the Arno (*Purg.* 14.37). Clearly, then, the poet casts the Arno as the objective correlative of the descent of the non-virtuous aristocracy. Like them, it is born into abundance—from the same source in Falterona, no less—yet it gives itself over to greed, sin, and disobedience. Indeed, just as the ill-behaved progeny of a great nobleman is cut off from his true virtue, so too are the Apennines cut off, quite literally, from their head in Peloro. The poet makes of the Arno the representation of an aristocratic bloodline devoid of all morality. In its descent, it is the physical metaphor for an aristocratic family tree.

Dante’s allegory becomes more complex as Guido then goes on to malign the denizens of the Arno valley. He claims that they have so changed their natures that it appears Circe herself has transformed them (*Purg.* 14.40–42). John A. Scott comments on this passage and notes that in the second book of the *Convivio* Dante employs Circe as a metaphor for the abandonment of reason (145). Scott’s observation certainly appears valid, because Dante vividly depicts the degradation of the people around the Arno by comparing them to beasts:

Tra brutti porci, più degni di galle
che d’altro cibo fatto in uman uso,
dirizza prima il suo povero calle.
Botoli trova poi, venendo giuso,
ringhiosi più che non chiede lor possa,
e da lor disdegnosa torce il muso.
Vassi caggendero; e quant’ella più ’ngrossa,
tanto più trova di can farsi lupi
la maladetta e sventurata fossa.
Discesa poi per più pelaghi cupi,

trova le volpi sì piene di froda,
che non temono ingegno che le occùpi.
(*Purg.* 14.43–54)

As Cormac Ó Cuilleanáin writes, each place in the valley has hellish reminiscences (123–24). Very likely, the pigs of Casentino represent incontinence, the dogs of Arezzo symbolize impotent violence, the wolves of Florence stand for real violence, and the foxes of Pisa signify fraud (Muresu, 15; Sermoni, 258). The poet appears to present each stage of the Arno as a progressively worsening condition. Yet, as Gabriele Muresu states, all the residents of the valley have arrived at the final stage of a metamorphic process that has extinguished every human trait from them (9). Although Dante clearly opens up the invective to allow a greater theological or moral perspective, it is also possible that he alludes specifically to the degeneracy of the urban nobility in the respective cities. In his commentary on *Purgatorio* 14, Dante’s son Pietro explicates the pigs as a reference to Porciana, a castle of the Counts Guidi outside Casentino; Pietro writes that they gave themselves over to lustfulness therein (369). Pietro’s comment about the sexuality of the Counts Guidi, it should be noted, may also influence the interpretation of the sonnet “Chi udisse tossir la mal fatata.” Tommaso Casini, moreover, suggests that the dogs of Arezzo (“botoli”) also constitute a pun on the name of the Bostoli aristocratic family (10). The allusions to the cities are not systematic, as the wolves and foxes most likely refer to other portions of the *Commedia* itself (e.g., *Inf.* 33.28–36).

After listing the four locations in the Arno valley, Guido seemingly changes topics, now prophesying about the priorate of Fulcieri de’ Calboli in Florence in 1303. As before, the lexicon and subject matters already present in the canto lead directly to this only apparent non sequitur. Working on behalf of the Black faction, Fulcieri violently persecuted the Whites who remained in the commune (Vasina, 761–62). Guido describes his actions in a lexicon comparable to that of his denigration of Florence, calling Fulcieri the hunter of those wolves on the banks of that fierce river:

Io veggio tuo nepote che diventa
cacciator di quei lupi un su la riva
del fiero fiume, e tutti li sgomenta.
Vende la carne loro essendo viva;

poscia li ancide come antica belva
molti di vita e sé di pregio priva.
(*Purg.* 14.58–63)

Expanding even further on his metaphors, Guido explains that Fulcieri will so despoil the forest that even in a thousand years it will not return to its natural state:

Sanguinoso esce della trista selva;
lasciala tal, che di qui a mille anni
ne lo stato primaio non si rinselva.
(*Purg.* 14.64–66)

When he speaks of the forest as marred for a millennium, the poet adds to the canto yet another element suggestive of an irreversible historical descent. Guido's portrait of Florence recollects Adam's Fall, implicit in the earlier description of the Arno (*Purg.* 14.37), which itself underscored the parallel with *Inferno* 14 and its Ovidian ages of humanity. In addition, the discussion of Fulcieri reinforces the question of nobility, which will become the central topic of *Purgatorio* 14. Later in the canto, Guido will identify his companion and Fulcieri's uncle, Rinieri de' Calboli, saying, "Questi è Rinieri; questi è 'l pregio e l'onore / della casa de' Calboli" (*Purg.* 14.88–89). Unlike Rinieri, who embodies the Calbolis' honor and merit ("pregio"), Fulcieri's actions in Florence will strip him of esteem ("sè di pregio priva," *Purg.* 14.63). By employing the same aristocratic term twice ("pregio," from "pretz"), Dante establishes a contrast in his depiction of the Calboli clan (Camerino, 106). Dante thus further stresses the conception that virtue, and hence nobility, is not transmitted genetically. The foresight of Fulcieri's priorate acts as a conclusion, therefore, to Guido's first discourse in *Purgatorio* 14.

Guido's discussion of Fulcieri not only advances Dante's ideas about the nobility present in the canto, but also continues using the stylistic characteristics attendant to medieval political satire. In this instance, the poet works into *Purgatorio* 14 concepts from the critical justification of literary castigation. Guido first introduces his prediction by claiming that he will not temper his speech:

Né lascerò di dir perch' altri m'oda;
e buon sarà costui, s'ancor s'ammenta
di ciò che vero spirto mi disnoda.
(*Purg.* 14.55–57)

No matter how difficult the matters about Fulcieri will be for Rinieri to hear, for the benefit of the pilgrim Guido will state them. Vituperation—the explicit chastisement of vice—has salubrious effects, Guido spells out, although it can be unpleasant. Hence the poet subtly reminds his readers of the ethical underpinnings to the medieval literature of reprehension. And in fact, as Dante will depict momentarily, its harshness is precisely the manner by which reprehension achieves its moral objective. After Guido talks of Fulcieri, the narrator depicts Rinieri’s response:

Com’ a l’annunzio di dogliosi danni
si turba il viso di colui ch’ascolta,
da qual che parte il periglio l’assanni,
così vid’io l’altr’ anima, che volta
stava a udir, turbarsi e farsi trista
poi ch’ebbe la parola a sé raccolta.
Lo dir de l’una e de l’altra la vista
mi fer voglioso di saper lor nomi
e dimanda ne fei con prieghi mista.
(*Purg.* 14.67–75)

On hearing of his nephew’s future iniquity, Rinieri’s face becomes disturbed, the poet writes, like that of a person who learns of danger (*Purg.* 14.67–69). As Dante expresses it here, the intention behind reproof is to forestall a hazard, in particular the risks of vice. The poet expresses that threat of peril as a potential bite (“l’assanni,” *Purg.* 14.69), again recalling the medieval critical language of invective studied by Suitner. Guido’s statements and Rinieri’s reaction inspire the pilgrim’s desire to find out who they are (*Purg.* 14.73–75). As represented through the actions of his protagonist, Dante apparently condones the literature of reprehension and its appropriate response.

As the passage above illustrates, Dante again deemphasizes the pilgrim by relating in indirect discourse his query about the names of the two penitents. In response, Guido del Duca identifies himself (*Purg.* 14.76–81) before describing the nature of his sin:

Fu il sangue mio d’invidia sì rïarso,
che se veduto avesse uom farsi lieto,
visto m’avresti di livore sparso.
Di mia semente cotal paglia mieto:
o gente umana, perché poni ’l core
là ’v’ è mestier di consorte divieto?
(*Purg.* 14.82–87)

Antonio Piromalli notes that Thomas Aquinas divided envy into two categories: happiness over another's misfortunes and sadness over another person's successes (5–6). Clearly, Guido embodies the latter form of envy while Sapia, in the previous canto, symbolized the former. As Kirkpatrick points out, the second form of envy manifests itself in a fear of the excellence of other individuals, as if their high quality threatens one's own (68). In the passage above, Guido speaks of his own personal psychological inclination. At the same time, however, he employs a key word, *blood* ("sangue," *Purg.* 14.82), which calls to mind the entire ideology of medieval aristocracy.

Highlighting the suggestion that the passage relates to the entire class of the nobility, the poet has Guido introduce another suggestive metaphor. Before expounding on the human weakness to place its heart in worldly matters, Guido claims that he harvests such straw from his seeds (*Purg.* 14.85–87). The poet does not elaborate on the metaphor, but the vocabulary of insemination appears connected to the lexicon of birth used in the discussion of the Arno. If so, then it may be part of a greater network of referents to nobility found throughout this canto. The verse may imply that Guido's envious nature differs widely from the virtuous character of the illustrious founder of his line. It seemingly encapsulates, for a second time in the canto, Dante's conception in the *Convivio* that true nobility is not genetically inherited. Since it is a metaphor, however, we should be careful not to read into it a singular signification, for indeed it serves several purposes in the textual economy of the canto.

When Guido introduces Rineri, he alludes to the Calboli house in a manner similar to the depiction of his physical person. Like the desiccated straw he reaps, Guido says that the blood of the Calboli has itself become barren: "E non pur lo suo sangue è fatto brullo" (*Purg.* 14.91). Yet their condition afflicts much of northern Italy. In fact, he continues, the entire Romagna is beset by poisonous thorn-bushes: "è ripieno / di venenosi sterpi" (*Purg.* 14.94–95). As shown below, the infertility suggested by Guido's allusions to straw and thorn-bushes becomes an important motif in the invective against the aristocracy of the Romagna, strengthening the notion of the problematic relationship between nobility and birthright.

In his monologue, Guido has now turned his attention from Dante's native region, Tuscany, to his own, the Romagna. Ermengildo Pistelli characterizes the canto as an episode that is equally Tuscan and Romagnolo (5). To accentuate the transition to a new subject matter, Guido

repeatedly apostrophizes the pilgrim as "Tuscan" ("Tosco," *Purg.* 14.103, 124). Yet, as before, several textual features link it to the preceding verses. Guido identifies the Romagna by its geographical features: "tra 'l Po e 'l monte e la marina e 'l Reno" (*Purg.* 14.92). It is highly ironic that the aridity of the Romagna, as exemplified by its flora, occurs in a zone bathed by two rivers and washed by the ocean. Guido specifically delineates the region according to its watercourses, positioned at either end of the verse, forcing a parallel with the previous invective of the Arno (Bruscagli, 120); in addition, he also described the Arno valley according to its mountain chain and its relationship to the sea (*Purg.* 14.32, 35). In other words, the correspondences between the two passages illustrate that the same turpitude troubles both regions equally. Yet while the Tuscan river metaphorically symbolized the concept that bloodlines and inherited riches are divorced from true nobility, the poet now uses specific instances of vile and wealthy descendants not behaving like their illustrious forebears.

At several times in the invective, the poet spells out explicitly what he has thus far only implied. When Guido introduces Rinieri, calling him the honor and virtue of the Calboli house (*Purg.* 14.88–89), he adds that no one else in that family has inherited his virtue: "ove nullo / fatto s'è reda poi del suo valore" (*Purg.* 14.89–90). The poet now openly reiterates his belief that true nobility—that is, the potential for virtue—is not a genetic trait passed through families. On the contrary, in the middle of reminiscing of the great noble individuals, Guido exclaims outright: "O Romagnuoli tornati in bastardi!" (*Purg.* 14.99). As seen in "Bicci novel, figliuol di non so cui," Dante uses the charge of illegitimacy to draw attention to the misdeeds of the aristocracy; as before, the poet indicates that immoral behaviors break familial bloodlines as surely as sexual indiscretions. In *Purgatorio*, it appears that a person's crimes separate him from his family; in the sonnet, however, Simone seemingly conferred bastard status on his own sons. Through Guido's exclamation, Dante very clearly recalls another of his sonnets from the *tenzone* with Forese Donati. At the same time, within the canto itself the concept of bastardy recollects the sterility of the arid plant life of the Romagna, and is connected itself to the terminology of birth present in the invective against the Arno. These are not separate and distinct literary motifs within *Purgatorio* 14, but instead they all work together to communicate Dante's ideological message.

At this point, Guido engages in a lengthy monologue about the nobility of the Romagna, listing the great noblemen of the past. Guido declaims a type of *ubi sunt?*, asking about men such as Lizio and Arrigo Manardi, Pier Traversaro, Guido di Carpigna, Bernardin di Fosco, Guido da Prata, Ugolino d'Azzo, Federigo Tignoso, and the houses of the Traversari and Anastagi (*Purg.* 14.97–107).¹¹ Another commonplace of the scholarship on the canto is the concept of “nostalgia” (e.g., Grana, 8). Yet analysis of the passage reveals that the poet’s intentions are not simply those of wistfully evoking ancient times. Rather, I maintain, his purpose is to exemplify his idea that true nobility cannot be passed from ancestor to descendant. The poet even cites a counter-example, much like the relevant discussion of the *Convivio*. In that passage, he asked his readers to posit a hypothetical Gherardo da Cammino, not the actual person born into a noble line, but as the offspring of the lowest peasant that ever drank from the Cagnano or Sile. Such a man would still be noble. Guido brings up Bernardin di Fosco from Faenza (v. 101) and points out the man’s humble origins by calling him a great branch on a small stem: “verga gentil di picciola gramigna” (*Purg.* 14.102). Despite his low birth, Bernardin truly was noble, Dante stresses, just as Gherardo da Cammino would be even if he were the descendant of a farmer. The poet refers to Bernardin to emphasize his belief in the true essence of nobility as inner virtue.

The plant metaphor used in reference to Bernardin, furthermore, resonates strongly in the canto. It casts into sharp relief Guido del Duca’s description of his envious temperament as a harvest of straw and the subsequent aridity of the Romagna. Hence, Bernardin’s courteous nature bore fruit in a manner juxtaposed to the sterility of Guido’s envy. Importantly, however, the plant metaphors in *Purgatorio* 14 may constitute yet another link to the discussion of aristocracy in the fourth book of the *Convivio*. Catherine Keen observes that in the relevant portion of the *Convivio*, Dante repeatedly employs the organic metaphors of plants growing from seeds to illustrate the interdependent concepts of virtue and nobility (75). Through his floral language, the author counterpoises the fecundity of courtesy to the infertility of greed in *Purgatorio* 14. Weeping now, Guido remembers the entire culture of nobility:

Non ti maravigliar s’io piango, Tosco,
quando rimembro con Guido da Prata, . . .
.

le donne e ' cavalier, li affanni e li agi
che ne 'nvogliava amore e cortesia
là dove i cuor son fatti sì malvagi.
(*Purg.* 14.103–04, 109–11)

All the trappings of nobility in the past, he states, inspired love and courtesy (*Purg.* 14.109–10). Kirkpatrick notes that the word “courtesy” occupies a cardinal position in Dante’s political and ethical thought (69). In the second book of the *Convivio*, Dante defines “cortesia” as honesty; it is etymologically related to “court,” he continues, because it referred to the virtues and beautiful customs therein:

Cortesia e onestade è tutt’uno; e però che ne le corti anticamente le virtudi e li belli costumi s’usavano, sì come oggi s’usa lo contrario, si tolse quello vocabulo da le corti, e fu tanto a dire cortesia quanto uso di corte. Lo qual vocabulo se oggi si togliesse da le corti, massimamente d’Italia, non sarebbe altro a dire che turpezza. (*Conv.* 2.10.8)

If the word “courtesy” had been derived from contemporary courts, Dante adds in the passage above, it would not mean honesty but immorality. And the poet expresses virtually the same concept in *Purgatorio* 14 when he contrasts the passion and honesty inspired in the past, where now the hearts of the aristocrats have become so wicked.

Just as Guido decried the various cities along the path of the Arno earlier in the canto, so he now targets different castles of the Romagna. Using breeding terms such as *rifiglia* and *figliar*, which casts the aristocratic families as animals, Dante, through Guido, further strengthens the connection with the reprehension of the Arno valley:

O Bretinoro, ché non fuggi via,
poi che gita se n’è la tua famiglia
e molta gente per non esser ria?
Ben fa Bagnacaval, che non rifiglia;
e mal fa Castrocaro, e peggio Conio,
che di figliar tai conti più s’impiglia.
(*Purg.* 14.112–17)

Philip Jones comments that a number of aristocratic families died off at the end of the Duecento thanks to a simple failure to reproduce (305). In the passage above, the poet praises the situation and encourages others to follow suit. At this point, the vocabulary of fertility and the metaphors of

sterility strewn throughout the canto come into clear focus: if powerful families cannot pass on true nobility genetically, Dante satirically claims, it would be best if they stopped procreating altogether. The passage, with its crescendo of stylistic reminiscences of the *tenzone* with Forese Donati, also clarifies Dante's earlier references to illegitimacy. Simone's misbehaviors allegorically interrupted the bloodline of the Donati, Dante seemed to say in the poetic correspondence. Now, rather than decry that fact, he proclaims that all miscreant aristocrats should draw their lineages to a close, but should do so honestly.

Immediately thereafter he openly recalls the literary correspondence with Forese when he praises the Pagani for not having more children (*Purg.* 14.118–19); sadly, they cannot restore their good name: “ma non però che puro / già rimagna d’essi testimonio” (*Purg.* 14.119–20). The descendants’ crimes overshadow the good deeds of the illustrious founder of their line. And, to close the entire monologue, Guido mentions Ugolin de’ Fantolin, whose reputation is secure because he has no children (*Purg.* 14.121–23). As Antonio Piromalli states, the references to the tradition of medieval satires throughout the canto serves to make the expression of indignation more poetic (26). But I hold that Dante does not merely cite the *tenzone* for citation’s sake; rather, the presence of the *tenzone* has a greater purpose in the overall message of the canto.

Guido del Duca finishes his tirade and asks the pilgrim to leave (*Purg.* 14.124–26). Dante and Virgil depart silently, and as they walk examples of envy punished resound through the air like thunderclaps (*Purg.* 14.127–41). While the numerous examples of critical references to satirical comedies in the canto have buttressed the sociopolitical opinions about the aristocracy, they have also foreshadowed this crucial episode. Virgil then explains to the frightened pilgrim what they have heard:

. . . “Quel fu ’l duro camo
che dovria l’uom tener dentro a sua meta.
Ma voi prendete l’esca, sì che l’amo
de l’antico avversaro a sé vi tira;
e però poco val freno o richiamo.”
(vv. 143–47)

Virgil calls the disembodied voices the bit and the bridle (“camo,” *Purg.* 14.143; “freno,” *Purg.* 14.147) that keep someone from going astray. He contrasts those mouthpieces to the hook and bait that the devil uses to

deceive humanity (*Purg.* 14.145–46). According to Anthony K. Cassell, in his discussion Virgil employs equestrian terminology from the Platonic tradition that refers to correctives for sin (16). In fact, Dante uses precisely the same terms toward the end of the *Monarchia*, claiming that human greed will lead men, like beasts, off the correct path were it not for the bridle and bit: “. . . humana cupiditas postergaret nisi homines, tanquam equi, sua bestialitate vagantes, ‘in camo et freno’ compescerentur in via” (3.15.9; emphases added).¹² In Dante’s political treatise, the compulsion of the state functions as the bridle and the bit, while the canto portrays language employed as the corrective for human weakness—yet what is this if not the reprehension of vice? In one sense, this episode represents the metaphorical point of arrival for *Purgatorio* 14; the topos of invective throughout the canto comes to its conclusion with Virgil’s explication of the examples of the punishment of envy.

In conclusion, *Purgatorio* 14 is a tightly woven canto in the *Commedia*. In it, the poet carefully constructs a network of themes and motifs, each of which reinforces his belief, first expressed in the *Convivio*, that true nobility is an inner characteristic and not an inherited trait. The poet calls his treatise to mind through various references, including the citation of his sonnet addressed to Forese Donati. Since none of the envious souls can see, it makes sense that the poet would introduce the concept of vituperation at this time. By using the reference to his insulting poetry as a guide, it has been shown that no portion of the canto can rightly be called a digression, because the entire canto is internally consistent.

But one question remains: why did Dante choose to bring up his beliefs about nobility at this time? What does the aristocracy have to do with envy? I believe an answer to this question can be found in the following canto. In *Purgatorio* 14 Guido characterized his sin as placing one’s heart where there is a prohibition of companionship: “là ’v’ è mestier di consorte divieto” (14.87). The verse is so crucial to understanding the canto that, in yet another case of self-commentary, the poet glosses it later in the work. In *Purgatorio* 15, Virgil explicates Guido’s words by saying that worldly goods are diminished when they are divided with a companion; for that reason, he concludes, they move one to envy (15.49–51). Possessions and honors, which the medieval aristocracy had in abundance, cannot be shared so they lead to envy; envy in turn leads naturally to degeneracy. In the *Convivio* Dante had written that riches had no effect on true nobility. In the *Commedia*, it seems that the poet has changed his

opinion and now views them as an actual impediment to it. As Dante has Virgil state in the closing lines of *Purgatorio* 14:

Chiamavi 'l cielo e 'ntorno vi si gira,
mostrandovi le sue bellezze etterne,
e l'occhio vostro pur a terra mira;
onde vi batte chi tutto discerne.
(*Purg.* 14.148–51)

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NOTES

1. Dante's *tenzone* with Forese Donati is cited from Domenico De Robertis's 2005 edition.
2. See, for instance, the theme of the relationship in the afterlife between body and soul, which runs through the entire canto (e.g., *Purg.* 14.10–12, 19, 93, 110). For closer analysis of this trope throughout *Purgatorio*, see Manuele Gragnolati's *Experiencing the Afterlife: Soul and Body in Dante and Medieval Culture* (Notre Dame, Ind: University of Notre Dame Press, 2005).
3. Regarding the wealth of the Counts Guidi, Giovanni Villani relates the proverbial expression, "Tu stai più ad agio che 'l Conte in Poppi" (vol. 1, 469).
4. Several historians have raised the question whether the Alighieri were truly the hereditary nobles that the poet portrays them to be in the episode with Cacciaguida (e.g., Fiumi, Sanfilippo).
5. Dante returns to the question of virtuous parents producing ill-behaved offspring in *Paradiso*: "com' esser può di dolce seme amaro" (8.93).
6. In the early twentieth century, scholars debated the political nature of *Purgatorio* 14. Ermenegildo Pistelli describes it as a political canto (23), while Carlo Grabher, who emphasizes the spiritual nature of the episode, asserts that politics has no place in it (153). Gianni Grana agrees with Pistelli (5), and Antonio Piromalli tries to find a middle ground between the two positions, stressing that the politics and morality support one another (10).
7. According to the *Concordanza della Commedia di Dante Alighieri*, "coverchia" is not a hapax in *Purgatorio* 14, for it occurs in three other instances: *Inferno* 23.136, *Inferno* 34.114, and *Purgatorio* 2.2 (507). Yet the other instances have the meaning of "to cover" rather than "to close" as in one's eyes (Onder, 205).
8. For an interesting examination of Dante's avoidance of obscenities—described as overtly sexual matters—as contrasted to his use of scatological terms, see Zygmunt G. Barański, "Scatology and Obscenity in Dante."

9. “For instance, degraded and disgraceful things are usually hidden under some other locution; as our poet does beautifully and honestly in *Inferno* canto 25, where, wanting to mention the male member, he says: ‘the member that a man hides’; and in canto 25 of *Purgatorio*, wanting to say how sperm descends to the testicles, he says: ‘it descends where it is more beautiful to stay silent than to speak’; and thus concerning many other words.” Benvenuto da Imola is cited from the Dartmouth Dante Project (darmouth.dante.edu). The translation is mine.

10. Cacciaguida uses a remarkably similar expression to bypass the discussion of his ancestors: “Basti de’ miei maggiori udirne questo: / chi ei si fosser e onde venner quivi, / più è tacer che ragionare onesto” (*Paradiso* 16.43–45). Interestingly, *Paradiso* 16 is also a canto that deals with the question of nobility.

11. For historical analyses of the people cited by Dante, see the two studies by Paolo Amaducci and that by Francesco Torraca. See also the relevant entries from the *Enciclopedia dantesca*.

12. “Yet human greed would turn its back on these ends and means unless men, like horses straying to satisfy their bestial desires, were kept on course ‘by bit and bridle.’” The translation of Dante’s *Monarchia* is by Richard Kay.

“Only Historicize”: History, Material Culture (Food, Clothes, Books), and the Future of Dante Studies

TEODOLINDA BAROLINI

“*Only connect!*”

E.M. Forster

The *Commedia* has produced a prodigious amount of exegesis since the fourteenth century, and consequently one of our tasks is to direct and reassure the responsible young scholar who may think there is nothing left to say. The fact, however, is that there is plenty left to say, in part because for centuries many commentaries did little more than repeat previous commentaries and in part because the implicit hermeneutic guidelines structured by Dante into his text determine, indeed overdetermine, interpretation. My advice to the young Dante scholar is “only historicize.”

Of course, Fredric Jameson’s “always historicize” dates back to 1981.¹ But fields have their own histories. As has been pointed out in the context of African American literary studies: “At a time when theorists of European and Anglo-American literature were offering critiques of Anglo-American formalism, scholars of black literature, responding to the history of their own discipline, found it ‘radical’ to teach formal methods of reading.”² There are good reasons that Dante scholarship, following its own particular trajectory, has been slow to reach this point: lack of historicizing has been an abiding feature of Dante exegesis, an essentializing tradition in which the entry “Inferno” in the *Enciclopedia dantesca* does not even gesture toward the history of the idea of hell. We have had to find ways

to get traction in dealing with an overdetermined hermeneutic template engineered by the author to prescribe our readings. For me this traction came through “detheologizing”—a narrative approach that cleared the way for historicizing.³ By “only historicize” I mean to invoke the well known injunction of E. M. Forster’s *Howards End* and thus to exhort rather than to restrict: “Only connect! That was the whole of her sermon. Only connect the prose and the passion, and both will be exalted, and human love will be seen at its height. Live in fragments no longer. Only connect, and the beast and the monk, robbed of the isolation that is life to either, will die.” The fact that Forster’s plea also takes a stand that is profoundly against dualism makes it, in my view, all the more suited as a Dantean epigraph.

One way to historicize is through the study of material culture: the *Commedia* is full of information about food, clothes, books, and other aspects of the material culture in which it was created. In his early works Dante pays less attention to the historical, physical, and material occurrences of lack in human life, inclining consistently rather to the psychological, spiritual, and metaphorical. Thus love-suffering makes the lover-poet “magro” in the early canzone *Lo doloroso amor*, in a verse that provides the only use of the adjective “thin” in Dante’s lyrics (“E de la doglia diverrò sì magro” [*Lo doloroso amor*, 18]), while eating in the *Vita Nuova* occurs only in the scene in which Love constrains Beatrice to eat her lover’s heart: “che le faceva mangiare questa cosa che in mano li ardea, la quale ella mangiava dubitosamente” (*VN* 3.6).⁴ This event has a physical antecedent in an Occitan story of literal heart-eating and will recur in its literal form in the *Decameron* as well, but in Dante’s youthful *libello* it remains steadfastly if somewhat unappetizingly symbolic, occurring within an apparition of Love that the prose glosses as a “maravigliosa visione.” There are no other occasions in the *Vita Nuova* in which the author is called upon to use *mangiare* or its more aulic variant *pascere* (which is the form he uses in the sonnet being glossed by the prose cited above: “Poi la svegliava, e d’esto core ardendo / lei paventosa umilmente pascea” [*A ciascun’ alma presa e gentil core*, 12–13]). The *Vita Nuova* contains no instances of *magro*, of its antonym *grasso*, of *pasto*, of *cibo*, of *pane*. The semantic field widens in Dante’s later moral poems: *pasto* and *pane* both appear once in *Doglia mi reca*, while *cibo* appears once in *Poscia ch’Amor*.

Dante’s unfinished philosophical treatise, *Convivio*, engages material life in its very title, which refers to the banquet of knowledge in the vernacular offered on behalf of those who cannot read philosophy and theology

in Latin. Although the word *pane* is used metaphorically, referring to the crumbs of knowledge from the table where the bread of the angels is served that Dante will dispense to those who have been knowledge-deprived ("Oh beati quelli pochi che seggiono a quella mensa dove lo pane de li angeli si manuca! e miseri quelli che con le pecore hanno comune cibo!" [*Conv.* 1.1.7]),⁵ these metaphors are attuned to a meditation that embraces very real and material forms of life and culture.

Material life is thematized immediately in the *Convivio*: the first chapter's explanation of why the *Convivio* exists is essentially an analysis of the forms of human deprivation, both spiritual and material, that the author is undertaking to redress. The argument is constructed as follows. It is a given, based on Aristotle, that "tutti li uomini naturalmente desiderano di sapere"; it is further given that each being inclines to its "propria perfezione" and that knowledge is the "ultimate perfection" of our soul and the source of our "ultimate happiness": "la scienza è ultima perfezione de la nostra anima, ne la quale sta la nostra ultima felicitade" (*Conv.* 1.1.1). Despite these givens, we can be deprived ("privati") of our ultimate human perfections, for there are both interior and exterior "defects and impediments" that remove us from attainment of knowledge: "Veraamente da questa nobilissima perfezione molti sono privati per diverse cagioni, che dentro a l'uomo e di fuori da esso lui rimovono da l'abito di scienza" (*Conv.* 1.1.2).

The interior defects that deter humans from acquiring knowledge in the analysis of the *Convivio* are, first, those that pertain to the body, as when a person is deaf or mute, and, second, those that pertain to the soul, as when a person is given over to the pursuit of vicious pleasures:

Dentro da l'uomo possono essere due difetti e impedi[men]ti: l'uno da la parte del corpo, l'altro da la parte de l'anima. Da la parte del corpo è quando le parti sono indebitamente disposte, sì che nulla ricevere può, sì come sono sordi e muti e loro simili. Da la parte de l'anima è quando la malizia vince in essa, sì che si fa seguitatrice di viziose delectazioni, ne le quali riceve tanto inganno che per quelle ogni cosa tiene a vile. (*Conv.* 1.1.3)

The exterior defects that remove us from the acquisition of knowledge are similarly twofold, the first caused by necessity and the second by a lazy disposition: "Di fuori da l'uomo possono essere similmente due cagioni intese, l'una de le quali è induttrice di necessitate, l'altra di pigrizia" (*Conv.* 1.1.4). *Necessitate* in this context includes those family and civic

pressures that deprive a man of the leisure for study: “La prima è la cura familiare e civile, la quale convenevolmente a sé tiene de li uomini lo maggior numero, sì che in ozio di speculazione esser non possono” (*Conv.* 1.1.4). The second exterior defect is laziness, the lack of self-motivation that can prevent someone who is deprived of educational resources and a university environment from making the effort on his own: “L’altra è lo difetto del luogo dove la persona è nata e nutrita, che tal ora sarà da ogni Studio non solamente privato, ma da gente studiosa lontano” (*Conv.* 1.1.4).

In this passage at the very beginning of the *Convivio* (1.1.1–4), Dante offers us a breakdown of the forms of material deprivation that can impede us from the self-perfection that is inherent in our species (or at least in its male members) that looks like this:

- I. Interior impediments: *difetti da la parte del corpo*
 - A. physical: deaf, mute, etc.
 - B. spiritual: *malizia*, the pursuit of vicious pleasures
- II. Exterior impediments: *difetti da la parte de l’anima*
 - A. *necessitate: cura familiare e civile*, which leaves no time for *ozio di speculazione*
 - B. *pigrizia*: being far from seats of learning

Dante concludes this analysis of forms of material deprivation by stating that the first of the interior and exterior impediments are to be excused, and the second are to be condemned, although *pigrizia* is less abominable than *malizia*.

This is a fascinating passage, indeed a succinct analysis of human life, its opportunities, and impediments—as well as an excellent example of untapped historical material. For me the opening of the *Convivio* has always been about the clarion call to an Aristotelian understanding of human desire for knowledge, about the affirmation that “tutti li uomini naturalmente desiderano di sapere” (*Conv.* 1.1.1). But it is also an unexploited opportunity to see Dante’s deep connectedness to everyday material life with its material vicissitudes. Thus the obstacles to self-fulfillment begin for Dante with physical defects of the body, “difetti da la parte del corpo,” which until very recently in human history posed insurmountable impediments to full participation in life. Turning to spiritual causes for

lack of self-realization, *difetti da la parte de l'anima*, again Dante is thinking of something quite concrete, for the soul that "si fa seguitatrice di viziose delectazioni" is a soul that is given over to pleasures of the flesh and deceitful material goods. We can see here an early form of the analysis of human incontinence and inclination to material goods that runs through the *Commedia*: here malice dominates the soul ("la malizia vince in essa"), while eventually Dante will not use the word *malizia* in the context of incontinence, although he will keep the image of domination ("che la ragion sommettono al talento" [*Inf.* 5.39]).

The path of "viziose delectazioni" is one of which the poet of the *rime petrose* had direct personal knowledge. When we come to the exterior impediments to self-fulfillment, we find further connections to Dante's own life (and we remember that the *Convivio* explicitly takes up the question of writing autobiography in the first person): he was famously caught up by "cura familiare e civile" (an issue important to Boccaccio in his treatment of Dante's life), and it is interesting to note how the syntax of this sentence frames *cura* as the subject, an active force that grasps and holds onto the majority of men ("la quale convenevolmente a sé tiene de li uomini lo maggior numero").

Why, however, is Dante so hard on those who have lack of knowledge "per difetto del luogo dove la persona è nata e nudrita," classifying this impediment to knowledge as *pigrizia*? A little later on in this first chapter Dante describes himself as one who knows firsthand the misery of deprivation and exclusion:

E io adunque, che non seggio a la beata mensa, ma, fuggito de la pastura del vulgo, a' piedi di coloro che seggiono ricolgo di quello che da loro cade, e conosco la misera vita di quelli che dietro m'ho lasciati, per la dolcezza ch'io sento in quello che a poco a poco ricolgo, misericordievolmente mosso, non me dimenticando, per li miseri alcuna cosa ho riservata, la quale a li occhi loro, già è più tempo, ho dimostrata; e in ciò li ho fatti maggiormente vogliosi. (*Conv.* 1.1.10)

Strikingly, Dante here identifies himself as one who has fled the fare offered the vulgar crowd ("fuggito de la pastura del vulgo") and tells of the miserable life of those that he himself has left behind ("la misera vita di quelli che dietro m'ho lasciati"). In other words, he indicates some kinship, some feeling of "there but for the grace of God go I" with those who have been deprived of knowledge, a kinship that perhaps causes him

to place an even greater value on the self-motivation that allowed him to leave such a “misera vita” behind. He seems to be saying that in the same way that he pushed himself to leave behind the “pastura del vulgo” and the “misera vita di quelli che dietro m’ho lasciati,” so others should push themselves. The need to be motivated to overcome lack recurs years later in another food-oriented passage to do with access to knowledge; in the address to the reader in *Paradiso* 10, Dante writes, “Messo t’ho innanzi: omai per te ti ciba” (*Par.* 10.25), where we can see in the “omai per te” a somewhat tempered expression of the feelings that lead to the *pigrizia* classification of *Convivio* 1.1.4.

Indicating that men can be deprived of knowledge because of material defects in their places of birth—“difetto del luogo dove la persona è nata e nutrita, che tal ora sarà da ogni Studio non solamente privato, ma da gente studiosa lontano” (*Conv.* 1.1.4)—Dante demonstrates a profound appreciation for the material causes and circumstances that condition and limit our lives: the significance of where we are born and where we are raised, and the deprivation caused by physical distance from and lack of access to educational resources, by being “da gente studiosa lontano.” Dante’s sensitivity to deprivation caused by limitations in one’s material circumstances is further reflected in his keen awareness of the material transmission of knowledge. Although in the *Convivio* he does not absolve those who are deprived “per difetto del luogo” from responsibility for their lack, the concern we see in this passage for the inequities that result from the uneven distribution of access to knowledge will reappear in *Paradiso* 19. Again Dante considers “lo difetto del luogo dove la persona è nata e nutrita,” this time with respect to a man born outside of the reach of Christian teachings, on the banks of the Indus, where there is no one who speaks or teaches or writes of Christ: “Un uom nasce a la riva / de l’Indo, e quivi non è chi ragioni / di Cristo né che legga né chi scriva” (*Par.* 19.70–72). Again, what is at stake for Dante is lack of knowledge, lack of access to the sources of knowledge, lack of access to the *ragionare di Cristo*, *leggere di Cristo*, and *scrivere di Cristo* that could produce knowledge. In these circumstances, Dante asks, “ov’è la colpa sua, se ei non crede?” (*Par.* 19.78). In this mature formulation the concern for inequitable distribution of access to knowledge has remained but no longer the *Convivio*’s concept of *pigrizia*. Rather, in a case such as that of the man born on the banks of the Indus, where it cannot be said that “messo t’ho innanzi,” where indeed the whole point from Dante’s perspective is that

no one has ever *messo innanzi*, Dante's concern for justice leads him to question how can it be this man's fault if he lacks belief in Christ.

Material desire and material lack are also present in the *Convivio* in Dante's parable of the stages of human life as a scaled ladder of desire, beginning with the desire for physical and affective nourishment and moving through various forms of social desire to the consuming desire for wealth: "Onde vedemo li parvuli desiderare massimamente un pomo; e poi, più procedendo, desiderare uno augellino; e poi, più oltre, desiderare bel vestimento; e poi lo cavallo, e poi una donna; e poi ricchezza non grande, e poi grande, e poi più" (*Conv.* 4.12.16). These desires bear witness to an inscribed Florentine sociology. We note the signifiers of social status and prestige—the beautiful clothing for display, the horse (indicating the importance that "knighthood," or being a *cavaliere*, still held for bourgeois Florence). Even the loaded Dantean desire for "una donna" seems more socially than stilnovistically constructed, reminding us of what in any case passage after passage in the *Commedia* makes clear, namely, that Dante was keenly alive to the social and political implications of choosing a wife. The proximity of horse to woman in this simultaneously very philosophical and very realistic scale of values offers us a view of woman as commodity in Dante's thought: Dante's placement of "una donna" in the sequence suggests that a woman satisfies man's desire more than a horse but less than wealth. Dante as social analyst was clearly capable of seeing women not in the idealized fashion we associate with his stilnovist poetry but as his society saw them. The *Convivio*'s ladder of material desire ends with wealth, whose ability to generate unending desire and unending lack looks forward to the *lupa* of *Inferno* 1, "che mai non empie la bramosa voglia, / e dopo il pasto ha più fame che pria" (*Inf.* 1.98–99).

We know the she-wolf of the *Commedia* as the embodiment of *cupiditas*, in other words, of extreme moral lack, but it is worth noticing that Dante figures moral lack as physical lack, conjuring the frightening image—particularly so in a world in which there was frequently the experience of not enough food—of being more hungry after a meal than before it. Of the *lupa* Dante writes that "che di tutte breme / sembiava carica ne la sua magrezza" (*Inf.* 1.49–50), thus engaging a semantic field that approaches the material in its most literally "visceral" sense: the semantic field of "thin" versus "fat," nourishment versus lack thereof. In the same canto, the nourishment-deprivation machine that is the *lupa* is countered by the *veltro*, characterized in terms of the kinds of incorrect nourishment on

which it does not feed: “Questi non ciberà terra né peltro” (*Inf.* 1.103). As a force that can systematically promote hunger, the *lupa* is constructed as feminine, as a she-wolf, because she is the precise negation of the nourishing maternal force that Dante figures, for instance, in the mother stork of the simile of *Paradiso* 19: the mother stork feeds her young, “poi c’ha pasciuti la cicogna i figli” (*Par.* 19.92), and, rather than still being hungry after eating, the baby storks then gaze at her with the sated look of “one who has fed”—“come quel ch’è pasto” (*Par.* 19.93). Similarly, the mother bird of the opening simile of *Paradiso* 23, who attentively awaits the dawn so that she can begin the work of finding food for her young—“per trovar lo cibo onde li pasca, / in che gravi labor li sono aggrati” (*Par.* 23.5–6)—is a figure of anti-material-lack, of material plenitude. Interestingly, the *Commedia*’s greatest withholder of nourishment is a man, a father, Ugolino. All the threads of the semantic field of hunger converge in his episode.

Ugolino is the other infernal wolf; he sees himself in dream as “il lupo” with his “lupicini” (*Inf.* 33.29), and he is the opposite of the mother bird of *Paradiso* 19. Many of the words that signify physical and material lack in the *Commedia*—real, unbearable, excruciating want—converge in the Ugolino episode: proceeding in the order of the narrative, we find *manducare*, *pane*, and *fame* in one verse (“Come ’l pan per fame si manduca” [*Inf.* 32.127]), *pasto* (“La bocca sollevò dal fiero pasto” [*Inf.* 33.1]), *fame* again (“la qual per me ha ’l titol de la fame” [*Inf.* 33.23]), *magro* (“Con cagne magre, studiose e conte” [*Inf.* 33.31]), *cibo* (“che ’l cibo ne solea essere addotto” [*Inf.* 33.44]), and—in the famous climax—*digiuno* (“più che ’l dolor, poté ’l digiuno” [*Inf.* 33.75]). This masculine variant of *la lupa* is the father who inflicts on his sons the fearsome material lack with which *Inferno* seals itself in hunger and horror: a material mirror of the ultimate and eschatological lack that is hell.

These words take on very different connotations in *Paradiso*, as Dante continues to explore the language of physical lack. There is a commentary on monastic life inscribed in the *Commedia*’s language of food and harvest and gardening and eating and fasting. While the satiation of the baby storks is an image of plenitude, the *Commedia*’s few uses of *grasso* offer negative social commentary, regarding the corruption of those who “si fanno grassi stando a consistoro” (*Par.* 16.114) and, most spectacularly, the Antonine monks, of whom it is said “di questo ingrassa il porco Sant’Antonio” (*Par.* 29.124). A few other examples will suffice: the Dominicans

would be able to "fatten" virtuously did they not err ("u' ben s'impingua se non si vaneggia" [*Par.* 10.96]); the Franciscan order "solea fare i suoi cinti più macri" (*Inf.* 27.93); Peter Damian, hermit and then prior of Fonte Avellana, was content "pur con cibi di liquor d'ulivi" (*Par.* 21.115); Saints Peter and Paul were "magri e scalzi, / prendendo il cibo da qualunque ostello" (*Par.* 21.128–29) compared to modern pastors, who are so heavy ("gravi") that they require two horses to hold them up as they travel; St. Peter began his spiritual horticulture "poor and hungry," "che tu intrasti povero e digiuno / in campo, a seminar la buona pianta / che fu già vite e ora è fatta pruno" (*Par.* 24.109–111); and let us not forget that Dante describes himself as "made thin" by the making of his poem—"sì che m'ha fatto per molto anni macro" (*Par.* 25.3)—in the same way that the Franciscan order "solea fare i suoi cinti più macri."

This language reverberates for Dante on a very personal level: he himself was "made thin" by his devotion; he himself was "nimico ai lupi" (*Par.* 25.6), the wolves that ravage Florence and keep him from returning to the fold; he himself was impoverished by his exile. Of course the virtues associated with material lack lead us to the Franciscans, whose embrace of poverty is so captivating to Dante; Dante's endorsement of Franciscan values (and perhaps even of radical Franciscan values) takes us back to the critique built into *la lupa* and featured in the *Convivio's* indictment of material wealth, as we saw in the crescendo of desire culminating in "ricchezza non grande, e poi grande, e poi più." Poverty and its semantic field are related to hunger and its lexicon. Hence St. Peter is "povero e digiuno" and he and Peter are described as "magri e scalzi," barefootedness being a sign of poverty that Dante links to the early Franciscans (it was also required of the hermits of Fonte Avellana), who responded to Francis's ministry by kicking off their shoes: "Scalzasi Egidio, scalzasi Silvestro" (*Par.* 11.83).

Dante suggests his own ability to appreciate beautiful clothing ("bel vestimento") by featuring it so prominently in the *Convivio's* scaled desires. But by the time the mature Dante wrote the *Paradiso*, his view of *bel vestimento* had decidedly curdled, to the point that his indictment of contemporary Florence is also a manual to and indictment of contemporary fashion: "Non avea catenella, non corona, / non gonne contigiate, non cintura / che fosse a veder più che la persona" (*Par.* 15.100–102). Moreover, despite the gendered description of an idealized past Florence as "sobria e pudica" (*Par.* 15.99), and despite the temptation, rarely

resisted by moralists, to focus concerns about excess in dress on women (see, for instance, *Purgatorio* 23.101 on the “sfacciate donne fiorentine”), in Dante’s case, although more is said about female fashion decadence than male, the fashion indictment also includes the habits of contemporary Florentine men. Their tastes have apparently become more lavish since the good old days, when a kind of “caveman chic” seems to have been the prevailing dress code of the upper-class Florentine; as Cacciaguida says (without a hint of irony), “Bellincion Berti vid’ io andar cinto / di cuoio e d’osso” (*Par.* 15.112–13) and “vidi quel d’i Nerli e quel del Vecchio / esser contenti a la pelle scoperta” (*Par.* 15.115–16).

Dante’s interest in the materiality of texts or other vehicles for signs, such as papyrus (“come procede innanzi da l’ardore, / per lo papiro suso, un color bruno” [*Inf.* 25.64–65]), is readily apparent in the *Commedia*. For instance, references to what may be found “above” in the text—as in “li altri due che ’l canto suso appella” (*Inf.* 33.90) and “però miri a ciò ch’io dissi suso” (*Par.* 13.46)—betray an awareness of the text as material object, all the more interesting in that the fictive orality of “ciò ch’io dissi” is trumped by the nonfictive materiality of the text, in which one must look “above” for the speaker’s previous statements. Another telling instance of Dante’s awareness of the materiality of text is to be found in his indictment of the many misguided folk who study the decretals rather than the Gospels, referred to as those who wear out the margins of their decretals: “e solo ai Decretali / si studia, sì che pare a’ lor vivagni” (*Par.* 9.134–35). Dante’s awareness of the material transmission of texts extends even to the written word of God, the Bible, as we can see in expressions like “sì come ne scrive Luca” (*Purg.* 21.7), a phrase that comes from the Statius episode, a high-density meditation on both biblical and classical textual transmission.

Particularly interesting to me is the passage in *Paradiso* 19 in which Dante suggests that the exclusion from Paradise of those born in geographically remote areas of the world—in his words “alla riva / dell’Indo” (*Par.* 19.70–71)—is unjust precisely because the word of God was not textually and materially disseminated to those places: “e quivi non è chi ragioni / di Cristo né chi legga né chi scriva” (*Par.* 19.71–72). The gloss of “chi legga” in the Bosco-Reggio commentary as “chi insegni” (“*Leggere* è termine ‘tecnico’ per indicare l’insegnamento, in genere universitario”) brings us back to the *Convivio*’s opening passage, on the importance of geographical proximity to universities and the knowledge they offer.⁶

Moreover, *Paradiso* 19.72 is the only verse in the *Commedia* to contain both *leggere* and *scrivere*: the concentration of textual language serves to indicate the importance, and indeed indispensability, of specifically directed reading and writing—in this case the reading and writing of Christ—in the transmission of culture. And in fact Statius explains his conversion to Christ by pointing to the consonance he experienced between Vergil's Fourth Eclogue and the newly disseminated words of the apostles: in contrast to the man on the banks of the Indus, he experienced the true faith because it was "seminata / per li messaggi dell'eterno regno" (*Purg.* 22.77–78).

The man born on the banks of the Indus takes us to another topic that will yield fruit in years to come, namely, Dante's "multiculturalism," a term I use to refer to Dante's eclectic fusion of intellectual and ideological traditions deriving from different times and places in order to suggest that Dante's diachronic syncretism is just as radical in its own time and place as the synchronic variety we practice today. Dante's concern for the man on the banks of the Indus suggests that he was more open-minded than many alive today, for his heterodox and problematized thinking on the subject of who will be saved and who will be damned operates synchronically as well as diachronically—along a geographical axis in the world as he knew it: his concern for justice embraces not only the saved pagans revealed with great fanfare in *Paradiso* 20 but also the "Ethiopian" whom he provocatively suggests may well be saved when many Christians will be damned (*Par.* 19.109–11).

Dante mentions Ethiopia/Ethiopians and India/Indians three times in the *Commedia*, in *Purgatorio* 26.21 (twice) and in *Paradiso* 19. He builds an orientalizing semantics through these citations: India and Ethiopia provide harsh desert landscapes in *Inferno* 14.32 ("d'India vide sopra 'l suo stuolo") and *Inferno* 24.89 ("mostrò già mai con tutta l'Etiopia"); in *Purgatorio* 26.21 the "Indo o Etiopo" are the inhabitants of torrid lands who crave cold water. Both Indians and Ethiopians serve as examples of non-Christians who may well be more virtuous than Christians in *Paradiso* 19. In her 2007 commentary to *Othello*, Kim Hall notes that "in early modern Europe Ethiopian frequently referred to black peoples in general."⁷ And yet Dante commentaries do not indicate whether Italians in Dante's time similarly construed the "Ethiope" as black. There is no reference to the Ethiopians' color in the *Enciclopedia dantesca*, published in the 1970s, and

more recent work continues in the traditional methodology of Dante studies, allegorizing historical specificity out of Dante's text.

This may be a small example, but it is symptomatic of the lack of historicizing that has been an abiding feature of Dante exegesis. We are beginning to reverse that tradition, dismantling the high-culture peak on which the *Commedia* has long stood, grand but isolated from that very history on which it so ceaselessly ruminates. We can see the massive work of historicizing that lies before us, as we build an enriched historical context and a deeper understanding of the *Commedia's* place within so many histories: the history of the book and textuality, the history of the reception of classical antiquity, the history of visions, the history of the afterlife (including its various subhistories: the history of hell, purgatory, paradise, Limbo), the history of theology (and its many subhistories: the history of resurrection theology, salvation theology, etc.), the history of the church (and its subhistories, including the liturgy), the history of monasticism, the history of women (including practices of maternity and childbirth), the history of courtliness, the history of Italy. The *Paradiso's* individual philosophical nodes will be parsed one by one as idiosyncratic Dantean solutions, in one of which he will incline more to Aristotelianism and in another more to Neoplatonism.

These histories overlap and imbricate one another, often in unexpected ways: for instance, historicizing Francesca da Rimini led me to *Inferno* 27, a canto that features the Polenta and Malatesta families in the context of the history of Romagna. Reading historians of Romagna allowed me to glimpse the remarkable and unexploited historical density of Dante's poetry in Canto 27: the drama of Guido da Montefeltro's false conversion in the canto's latter half is ripe for a reexamination that reads his story against the canto's earlier probing of Romagnol history. In *The Malatesta of Rimini and the Papal State*, the historian P. J. Jones writes of Guido's impact on Romagna that the "transformation of local into regional *signoria* was mainly the work of one man."⁸ Even the imagery of Canto 27 can be contextualized with respect to contemporary politics: for instance, Jones mentions a Ghibelline poem that "sets out to contrast the two captains, Guido 'leone' and Malatesta da Verucchio 'veltro'" (34), while in *Inferno* 27 Malatesta is a mastiff rather than a *veltro*, and Guido famously says that his deeds "non furon leonine, ma di volpe" (*Inf.* 27.75). When the pilgrim, speaking to Guido da Montefeltro in *Inferno* 27, refers to the "lunga prova" endured by Forlì before it reduced the French to a "sanguinoso

mucchio," he is referring to events in which historians assign that same Guido da Montefeltro the central role.⁹ And yet there has not been a reading of Dante's Guido da Montefeltro that takes into account his crucial role in a historical process—the formation of *tirannia*—that Dante deplored.

Dante's meditation on *tirannia* may be gleaned even from a glance at his use of the words *tirannia* and *tiranno/tiranni* in the *Commedia*, words that are concentrated in *Inferno* 12 and 27 (the "tiranno fello" of *Inf.* 28.81, a reference to Malatestino Malatesta, takes us back to the Malatesta family of *Inferno* 5 and 27). The reconstruction of this meditation through an investigation of these passages and especially of the families to which Dante alludes would be a most worthwhile project.

Indeed, Dante's thinking on the role of the *casato* as a key to the tragedy of Italian history is an unexplored feature of the Ugolino episode as well. *Inferno* 33 is steeped in the people and events that shaped Ugolino's politics, whose central node was the Pisan possession Sardinia. The Guelph Visconti and Ghibelline Gherardesca families, traditionally opposed, became allies to protect their Sardinian holdings, an alliance that led to the ill-fated shared magistracy of Ugolino and his grandson Nino Visconti, the same Nino whom Dante hails in the Valley of the Princes by his Sardinian title, calling him "giudice Nin gentil" in *Purgatorio* 8.53 (the provinces of Sardinia were called "giudicati").¹⁰ I believe that the betrayal for which Dante held Ugolino responsible may be traced back to his treatment of Nino Visconti during the period in which they shared power in Pisa. In any case, there is a story here regarding the exploitation of the bonds of family love to political ends, an exploitation that while taken to the extreme in Ugolino's case was systemic in Dante's society. The *Commedia* includes an amazing web of family—and hence political—interconnectivity spun by Dante, who so carefully chose and enmeshed the characters of his great poem (one more little example, leading back again to *Inferno* 5: Tebaldello de' Zambrasi of *Inferno* 32 was the father of Zambrasina, who married Gianciotto Malatesta after he killed Francesca). A tragic history of Dante's Italy awaits reconstruction by scholars who set out to trace systematically all these lines, thereby accessing the ideological freight carried by the *Commedia*'s great web of family and dynastic connections.

Coming back now to a different tragedy, that of exclusion from grace, Dante's concern for the man born on the banks of the Indus is the

geographical analogue to his concern for the virtuous pagans of classical antiquity: the Gospel did not reach one group because of its physical and geographical separation, while it did not reach the other because of its temporal remoteness. Here too we can experience the imbrication of history, for the history of visions offers insight into the nature of Dante's reception of classical antiquity. Dante does not differ from his humble visionary colleagues in the inclusion of contemporaries in his afterlife or in the inclusion of popes or kings; these are actions for which there are precedents. There is, however, no precedent for Dante's inclusion of figures from classical antiquity. The history of visions thus offers us a new prism through which to perceive Dante's early brand of humanism, his passionate commitment to classical culture. Historians of the Renaissance who have used Dante's placement of Aristotle and other pagans in Limbo and therefore in Hell as a marker of periodicity—a handy emblem of his still being “medieval”—have done so without historicizing Limbo: if we put Dante's Limbo in historical context, considering the history of the set of concepts aggregated under the rubric “Limbo,” we see how anomalous Dante's Limbo really is, for the history of Limbo does not include pagans. No theologian places pagans—or indeed adults of any kind—in Limbo, a place reserved for unbaptized infants (the Hebrew righteous having been freed from Limbo by Christ's harrowing of hell). Thus the point is not so much that Dante put most (but not all) of his pagans in Hell (he also was anomalous in saving pagans) but rather that classical antiquity exerted such a pull on his imagination that he felt compelled to engage it despite the absence of theological authority or visionary precedent.

We have more work to do on Dante's humanism, for it is perhaps the least overdetermined and the most incorrectly taken for granted aspect of Dante's poetics. There is a reception history here too, including a recent one that I have lived, for I was one of the critics who, in an attempt to replace impressionistic critical enthusiasms about Dante's filial piety toward Virgil with a more rigorous assessment of the poem's intertextuality, wrote in the 1980s about the *Commedia's* corrections of the *Aeneid* and classical antiquity. But I have come to see that more important than the revisions and corrections, which are indeed part of the *Commedia*, is the fact that it engages with classical antiquity so unremittingly. What does it mean—culturally speaking—for the author of a Christian afterlife to give classical as well as biblical *exempla* all through the *Purgatorio*? And

what does it mean that he explicitly bases his Hell on Aristotle's *Nichomachean Ethics*? While much attention has been given to the question of how exactly to make Aristotle's categories fit in Dante's Hell, there has been little surprise that a Christian author should cite Aristotle as the basis for a part of his afterlife. And yet we should be surprised, and we should further note that Aristotle survives as an ethical template into the *Purgatorio*, whose apparent basis in the Christian idea of the seven deadly vices is enriched and destabilized by the encroaching Aristotelian paradigm.¹¹ The terrace of avarice is the first to destabilize the strictly Christian organization of sin: in revealing that prodigality is also purged on this terrace, Dante constructs an Aristotelian template, based on the idea of virtue as the mean between two extremes, which in this case are avarice and prodigality. It is significant that Dante seems to retrofit all of Purgatory to the Aristotelian paradigm, having the character Statius proclaim the validity of Aristotle's doctrine of the mean for all of Purgatory: "E sappie che la colpa che rimbecca / per dritta opposizione alcun peccato, / con esso insieme qui suo verde secca" (*Purg.* 22.49–51).

Statius's declaration that on each terrace we find both the vice and its opposite is not verifiable and therefore dismissed by commentators. However, Dante's desire to establish the Aristotelian template is quite definitely at work in his creation of two sets of opposing *exempla* for each terrace: one set of *exempla* cites practitioners of the vice and the other cites practitioners of the opposing virtue, indicating perhaps that people not particularly inclined to that sin but at the same time not beacons of virtue find themselves somewhere in the Aristotelian middle. And Dante's analysis of love in *Purgatorio* 17 as the foundational impulse of all human behavior, whether good or bad, revels in the idea of the extremes, of "troppo di vigore" and "poco di vigore," again implying that unqualified *vigore* is the optimal course of behavior. Moreover, although only the terrace of avarice boasts two clear Aristotelian extremes with respect to the vice being purged, Dante's treatment of lust also lends itself to the construction of an Aristotelian template.

The complexity of Dante's handling of human sexuality has only recently begun to be addressed, and it continues to be misunderstood. A recent example of such misunderstanding is the rebuke issued by former Italian prime minister Andreotti to his political opponents in the debate on same-sex union: "Non sarebbe male se tutti, compreso Prodi, si andassero a rileggere Dante: i sodomiti nella *Divina Commedia* finiscono all'inferno."¹² Andreotti needs to read beyond *Inferno*, to *Purgatorio* 26, in order

to realize that Dante's treatment of homosexuality is not so simple. Yes, Dante places homosexuals in hell, classifying them as violent against nature. But his purgatorial terrace of lust features both heterosexuals and homosexuals: two files of souls moving in opposite directions around the fiery terrace who meet and hastily exchange brief kisses. In Purgatory, Dante reclassifies same-sex love so that it is no longer a form of violence against nature but is rather a passion susceptible to incontinence, just like heterosexual lust.

Another aspect of Dante's treatment of human sexual conduct that merits attention is his dignifying of marriage, again as part of creating an Aristotelian template with marriage marking the mean. The extremes are absolute chastity, exemplified by Mary's "Virum non cognosco" and Diana, and the excesses figured by the bestial love of Pasiphaë, and those who, like the Cretan queen, can say "non servammo umana legge" (*Purg.* 26.83). So we have a divine standard, a bestial standard, and an in-between standard, the *umana legge* exemplified by "donne / . . . e mariti che fuor casti / come virtute e matrimonio imponne" (*Purg.* 25.133–35). While I am not suggesting that Dante is a Protestant author *avant la lettre* who celebrates married love at length, I do take issue with the view that the absence of conspicuous happy married couples indicates Dante's lack of sponsorship of normative heterosexual human sexuality within a marriage contract, which includes affection, as signaled for instance by the verse "Da poi che Carlo tuo, bella Clemenza" (*Par.* 9.1). With genial concision Dante includes marital love in the heaven of Venus, apostrophizing the wife of Charles Martel with respect to what Dante had learned from "your Charles" and loading the possessive adjective in "Carlo tuo" with marital affection.

Dante thus continues the cultural line we find in a bourgeois moralist like Guittone d'Arezzo, whose canzone on female chastity, *Altra fiata aggio già, donne, parlato*, praises absolute chastity but is open to chastity within marriage for a woman who has or desires a husband: "Chi non pote o non vol castità tale, / che ha marito overo aver desia" (83–84). A woman who lives chastely with her husband is virtuous for Guittone; Dante goes further, praising men who engage in marital chastity as well: "donne / gridavano e mariti che fuor casti / come virtute e matrimonio imponne" (*Purg.* 25.133–35).

Dante's sense of sexuality cannot be constrained within a normative social context, for there are already signs in his youthful poetry that his

thinking on gender and sexuality is nonnormative and transgressive. As my concluding example of the results that can come from pressuring Dante's texts regarding their connections to gender, sexuality, ethnicity, history, and material culture, I offer two sonnets from the *Vita Nuova*—a text that has been even more insulated from history than the *Commedia*. In my work on a commentary to Dante's lyrics, I have found a wealth of social concerns embedded in Dante's poems, including *stil novo* poems that have traditionally been read only in terms of their ideology of love. Thus the two sonnets of *Vita Nuova* 22, in which Dante images a dialogue between himself and the ladies who are mourning the death of Beatrice's father, show us a Dante at odds with the restrictive social conventions of Florentine mourning practices: he desires a level of participation—including participation in the act of weeping—that is inappropriate for him both as a nonintimate and as a man. These sonnets, *Voi che portate la sembianza umile* and *Se' tu colui c'hai trattato sovente*, testify to a poet who views Florentine society with an almost anthropological attention and whose desire to transgress encompasses not only the poetic boundaries to which we are accustomed but social and gender boundaries as well.¹³

The good news for our students is that a massive work of social and historical contextualization lies before us.

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NOTES

1. *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press: 1981).

2. Henry Louis Gates Jr., Introduction to *PMLA* 105 (1990): 11–22; quotation, 15.

3. For instance, in dealing with *Inferno* 5, detheologizing allowed me to postulate interpretive categories more complex than "Dante places Francesca in hell, so his view of her is negative," and thereby opened the way for a reconsideration of Dante's treatment of the dynastic wife. "Dante and Francesca da Rimini: *Realpolitik*, Romance, Gender," *Speculum* 75 (2000): 1–28, reprinted in *Dante and the Origins of Italian Literary Culture* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2006), 304–32.

4. *Rime*, ed. Domenico De Robertis (Florence: Edizioni del Galluzzo, 2005); *Vita Nuova*, ed. Domenico De Robertis (Milan: Ricciardi, 1980).

5. *Opere minori* 1/2, ed. Domenico De Robertis and Cesare Vasoli, *La letteratura italiana: Storia e testi* 5 (Milan: Ricciardi, 1988). On the *Convivio*'s treatment of impediments to study, but without a consideration of material culture, see Sonia Gentili, *L'uomo aristotelico alle origini della letteratura italiana* (Rome: Carocci, 2005), ch. 4.

6. *Paradiso*, ed. Umberto Bosco and Giovanni Reggio (Florence: Le Monnier, 1979), 324.

7. *Othello, the Moor of Venice: Texts and Contexts*, ed. Kim F. Hall (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2007), 185.

8. *The Malatesta of Rimini and the Papal State*, 17. For the "long conflict between the Malatesta and Guido da Montefeltro, which was to continue intermittently until the end of the century," see pp. 33–34.

9. I am not suggesting that Dante views Guido da Montefeltro's leadership at Forlì negatively; rather, the historical context reveals to what degree Guido is a complexly "epic" figure, more like Ulysses, his companion in the *bolgia* of fraudulent counselors, than we have realized.

10. For more information that could be useful for historicizing the Ugolino episode, see *The Undivine Comedy* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1992), 96–97.

11. For this issue, see my "Medieval Multiculturalism and Dante's Theology of Hell," now in *Dante and the Origins of Italian Literary Culture*, 102–21. Much more work needs to be done on Dante's contribution to the history of hell, purgatory, and heaven. As I noted in *The Undivine Comedy*, with reference to Jacques Le Goff, *The Birth of Purgatory*, trans. A. Goldhammer (1981; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984): Le Goff's "chapter on Dante, the weakest in the book, makes very little use of the material that his own previous chapters provide" (200 n. 7).

12. M. Antonietta Calabrò, "Andreotti: non posso dire sì a unioni dello stesso sesso," *Corriere della Sera*, February 14, 2007; thanks to Gian Maria Annovi for drawing my attention to this article.

13. For a fuller reading of these sonnets along these lines see the first volume of my commentary to Dante's lyrics, *Rime giovanili e della Vita Nuova* (Milan: Rizzoli, 2009).

Dante between Antiquity and Modernity

PIER MASSIMO FORNI

The *Divine Comedy* is the work of an exceedingly gifted late-medieval poet who is also a devoted classicist. His devotion to antiquity, however, does not prevent him from looking at the *Aeneid* in a spirit of emulation. He feels compelled to respond to Virgil's great classical epic with a Christian and allegorical epic of the self, written in the vernacular of his own town. A major goal of Dante's is to present himself in the *Comedy* and through the *Comedy* as the greatest poet of his time and perhaps of all times. He accomplishes this feat of extravagant self-promotion by realizing two objectives: he emphasizes continuity within the tradition (continuity with Latinity, Dante as Virgil's pupil), and he emphasizes a break with tradition (Dante as innovator, mythographer of modernity).

Dante first needs to show his readers that since he is fully acquainted with the classical canon his credentials as a serious poet are in order. The facts, names, and figures from antiquity also allow him to enrich the texture of his story. But he cannot be satisfied with a simple rehearsal of the tradition. For his poem to be *the* poem of modern times he needs to anoint modern heroes. He needs to break with tradition even when it comes to the choice of language. In fact, his most daring break of all with tradition is that of choosing the vernacular Italian for a work conceived with unparalleled literary, philosophical, and spiritual ambitions. It is in the stunningly imaginative beginning of the poem that this double strategy of continuity with and departure from tradition can be discerned with great clarity. Here the *Divine Comedy* becomes simple, fits in our hands; we hold it, we grasp it—or at least we think that we do.

“Per me si va ne la città dolente,
Per me si va ne l’eterno dolore,
Per me si va tra la perduta gente.”
(*Inf.* 3.1–3)

When we think about the gate in Dante’s *Inferno*, we think of the monumental architecture featured at the very beginning of Canto 3. There is, however, another gate or portal in *Inferno*. This gate is not a piece of urban architecture, which Dante the pilgrim has observed along the way. It is instead an architectural element of the work of poetry that we are reading. It is the first five cantos that form this gate, and what counts for our purposes is that Dante the poet fashioned it in neoclassical style. More precisely, it is the first four cantos and the first part of the fifth that establish the continuity with the classical heritage. Things will change in the second part of Canto 5. Let us take a brief look at this a great neoclassical portal to *Inferno*. We are so used to it that we almost fail to notice it, but if we do we risk overlooking something important about Dante as innovative genius.

Virgil appears in Canto 1, and his presence fills all of its second part. By the end of the canto, Dante the pilgrim has put himself and his salvation in Virgil’s hands and Virgil has clearly acquired the role of revered guide for the journey—the ultimate Christian pilgrimage—that has just begun. Canto 2 is replete with Virgilian action. Dante speaks of Virgil’s *Aeneid*, observing that he is no Aeneas and that therefore he is unworthy of the journey. In reply, Virgil recalls his own conversation with Beatrice. It is Beatrice, Dante is told, who sent Virgil to rescue Dante from a quagmire of sin. It is Beatrice who instructed Virgil to be Dante’s guide until she will take his (Virgil’s) place. In the infernal environment of Canto 3 the educated reader recognizes features transposed from the Hell of ancient religion and mythology (Charon, the Acheron, etc.) and discovers Dante adapting and translating a simile from *Aeneid* 6.305–12 (the celebrated simile of the scattered leaves).

Come d’autunno si levan le foglie
l’una appresso de l’altra, fin che ’l ramo
vede a la terra tutte le sue spoglie,
similmente il mal seme d’Adamo
gittansi di quel lito ad una ad una,
per cenni come augel per suo richiamo.
(3.115–17)

By now it is apparent that he constructs his poem the way medieval churches were built all over Europe. Just as the Christian builders scavenged for construction materials in the ruins of Roman buildings, the Christian poet naturally appropriates whatever he needs of the ancient culture for his creative purposes.

The evocation of the splendors of antiquity reaches its peak in Canto 4. Here Dante casts a proud glance at a tradition of poetry that goes from Homer to Dante himself. It is here that the modern poet boldly depicts his self-cooptation into the most prestigious intellectual ranks in the history of humanity. Dante honors the poets of antiquity and is, in turn, honored by them: “e più d’onore ancora assai mi fenno, / ch’e’ sì mi fecer de la loro schiera, / sì ch’io fui sesto tra cotanto senno” (100–102). He has carved his niche in the pantheon of universal poetry. The poets aside, almost all the souls mentioned at the end of the canto belong to the world of antiquity: Electra, Hector, Aeneas, Caesar, Brutus, Lucretia, Socrates, Plato, Heraclitus, Orpheus, Cicero, Seneca, to name only a few. But no face-to-face encounter has taken place yet.

Canto 5 begins as a continuation of Canto 4. Iconic figures of antiquity are in full view:

“Elena vedi, per cui tanto reo
tempo si volse, e vedi ’l grande Achille,
che con amore al fine combatteo.
Vedi Paris, Tristano”; e più di mille
ombre mostrommi e nominommi a dito,
ch’amor di nostra vita dipartille.
(5.64–69)

To be sure, Dante is duly impressed and deeply moved:

Poscia ch’io ebbi ’l mio dottore udito
nomar le donne antiche e ’ cavalieri,
pietà mi giunse, e fui quasi smarrito.
(5.70–72)

And yet, at the same time, unobtrusively but surely his focus is shifting. It is here that Dante turns his back (figuratively, and maybe literally as well) to the world of antiquity.

I’ cominciai: “Poeta, volontieri
parlerei a quei due che ’nsieme vanno,
e paion sì al vento esser leggeri.”
(5.73–75)

As he redirects Virgil's attention away from the "knights and ladies of ancient times" something extremely exciting takes place. We witness the birth of the *Comedy* as an epic of modernity. And modernity arrives with lightness ("so light upon the winds") as if Paolo and Francesca, a knight and a lady of his own times, were unencumbered by the *gravitas* of their fellow sinners from antiquity. Francesca is the first soul with whom Dante has a dialogue (he spoke with the poets in Canto 4, but there is no record of their words). She is also the first character with whom he speaks in Hell proper (he spoke with the poets in Limbo). The great neoclassical portal formed by the first five cantos of *Inferno* comprises a magnificent, imposing introduction not to an encounter with a Dido or a Cleopatra, but with a provincial sinner whose story of adultery and bloodshed took place in the last quarter of the Duecento.

At this point of *Inferno* Dante leaves behind the mythology of antiquity in order to begin fashioning a mythology of modernity. Continuity with antiquity will not completely come to an end in the *Comedy*. Dante's mind and soul are imbued with the ancient stories and the ancient fables. He cannot cease to be a classicist and to write as one, even when he writes in the Florentine language of his own times. And yet we perceive that there is a fracture here. In order to become the Virgil of modern times he must embrace the lore of modern times. He needs to become the maker of new immortalities. The inveterate classicist must acquire greatness by fashioning stories out of the cloth of the present or of the recent past. Francesca, Farinata, Pier della Vigna, Brunetto: this chorus of heroes and heroines is meant, at least in part, to enhance the splendor of the central hero in the poem. This hero is, of course, Dante himself. Dante is awed by Dante, and his reader is meant to share his awe. Dante's greatest myth in his mythology of modernity is his own. It is the myth of the unjustly condemned Florentine exile who turns out to be the brightest intellectual star of his own times. Upon this man Heaven has smiled since the inception of his life. The *Comedy* is itself the divine proof of that divine smile.

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NOTE

This essay, written as an homage to Professor Christopher Kleinhenz and his career, is intended for teachers of Italian and of comparative literature who seek a way of communicating a general and introductory understanding of the "Dante phenomenon" to their students. Given how much teaching has meant to Professor Kleinhenz throughout his career, this seems to me a fitting topic.

The Pageantry of Dante's Verse

RICHARD LANSING

In his preface to *Dante, Poet of the Desert*, Giuseppe Mazzotta remarks with customary insight that

Dante scholarship, at its best, has shown a high degree of critical awareness and a truly compelling skill for unearthing factual sources and historical material. It is perhaps inevitable that philological research should produce results of more genuine value.¹

Any “attempt to map out the articulations of Dante’s culture,” he maintains, must engage the critic with an acute awareness of the philological heritage on which the text is built, meaning, as I understand the phrase, that a knowledge of the origin and meaning of words within their cultural context is prerequisite to any act of critical interpretation. The claim may seem self-evident to most of today’s readers of Dante, but in a world that over the past ten or fifteen years has witnessed the publication of more than a dozen new translations of the *Inferno*—several more if we count reprints of earlier versions—it bears repeating as a note of caution, especially for those who must decide which version to adopt for an undergraduate course in the humanities or simply which is most reliably up-to-date. Since the year 2000 we have new versions of the *Inferno* by Robert and Jean Hollander, Michael Palma, Anthony Esolen, Ciaran Carson, J.G. Nichols, Robin Kirkpatrick, Tom Simone, Sean O’Brien, Stanley Lombardo, and John Lambert.² The continuous appearance of new versions at a rate of almost one per year is nothing short of astonishing. No other classic reasserts itself with such regularity, and yet one wonders what sustains such a production. What possible need, what purpose? All rely on the same Italian text, the critical edition compiled by Giorgio Petrocchi,

which since 1966 has been considered the gold standard for the *Commedia*. The authenticity of the original text is therefore not at issue. Are the older versions simply too archaic or so inadequate to the original as to necessitate their replacement by renderings that are more contemporary and therefore presumably more accessible or more reliable? Given that older versions by John Ciardi, Mark Musa, and Henry Wadsworth Longfellow continue to remain in print, this would seem not to be the case.³ Are translators simply mesmerized by the challenge of producing the perfect translation, much like critics who seek to resolve the enigmatic identity of Dante's savior figure, the Veltro? Or does the broad array of versions merely reflect the heavy demand for textbooks in the academic sector and the commercial pursuit of revenue? This would seem to be a nontrivial consideration. Some publishing houses, such as Random House, even appear to be trying to corner the market. Its various divisions can boast of having four different *Infernos* simultaneously in print: the Hollander, Esolen, Mandelbaum, and Longfellow versions, the last edited by Lino Pertile and Matthew Pearl for one press and by Peter Bondanella for another.⁴

To account for this record of undiminished re-creation and reproduction would not, of course, be an easy, nor a very interesting, task. And it is not my purpose to explore the possible reasons for such vitality. I wish, rather, to address the intellectual and creative process that produced the Italian original and to suggest that newer versions are not always superior to older ones, and that indeed on occasion the new proves in fact less reliable than the old. Personal taste and style aside, inadequacies and infelicities in translation often result from an inability to kill two birds with one stone, that is, an inability to meet the demand of multiple strictures at one and the same time. The first thing to go is usually any attempt to capture the rhetorical interplay of Dante's skein of words. Understanding Dante means understanding his word patterns, knowing how the hendecasyllable imposes stresses and creates rhythm, hearing the echoes of biblical and classical texts, and being cognizant of the philosophical and theological concepts that inform the structure of ideas. It means that one must be always keenly aware of word definitions, lexical choices, etymologies, and, above all, the use of tropes, the rhetorical figures both of speech and of thought.

My purpose is to shed light on the way in which the *Commedia* draws on medieval intellectual traditions and to explore how Dante's prodigious intellect and creative imagination shaped poetic forms. The object of my focus is Dante's use of metaphor and in particular his reliance on imagery to represent ideas. The fashioning of images is itself an act of translation, of turning conceptual thought into pictorial form, and it shares with other acts of translation a rootedness in the word's etymological source. *Translatio* means to carry one thing over to another, to effect a transferal of sense from one thing to another in virtue of a perceived similarity between them. It is the Latin rhetorical term for "metaphor" in Greek, and metaphor is the most common as well as the most important of all tropes. The word "trope" derives from the Greek *tropos*, signifying a "turning" or "conversion," and consequently, in its broadest sense, it participates in the cognitive process of analogizing as the primary mode of understanding reality in the Middle Ages, and in particular for St. Thomas, the Scholastics, and of course Dante. Analogy is not simply the foundation of Dante's mimetic method of composition, it is the very method of God's composition of the physical universe. Medieval philosophers and theologians understood the creation to be endowed by the deity with analogical signs pointing to the invisible truths of the highest form of reality, the realm of the afterlife. This artistic principle underlies the method of composition that generates the *Divine Comedy* and informs it with an aesthetic coherence almost certainly unsurpassed by any other individual literary work. Image, trope, metaphor, analogy, and mimesis are all components of Dante's language of signs, which for my present purposes I will simply call the "pageantry" of Dante's verse. I am concerned with how the attributes of an individual verse or set of verses give poetic form to an image or a sound that then serves as a vehicle for the expression of an idea or concept connoted by the words themselves, that is, how words dramatize and illustrate the very ideas they articulate over and above any lexical definition. The first example requires a more extended treatment than others since, in my view, it represents a major revision of our understanding of an image appearing in a part of Dante's poem that is very familiar to us, the first canto of the *Inferno*. One way to help clarify interpretive issues is to demonstrate how English translations fall short of expressing the original meaning and note how they can serve

as a heuristic device to measure the degree of disparity between the original and its rendering in English.

1. The Matter of the Heart

While comparing different versions of Canto 1 of *Inferno*, I became curious about a common misrendering of a particular image in the opening scene of the poem. Among the various metaphors and symbols used to convey an image of the pilgrim lost in darkness, one has always struck me as unusual, as slightly strange and out of character with respect to the rest. To express how the sun's light on the mountain standing before the pilgrim calmed the fear he had experienced during his first night in the *selva oscura*, the poet introduces the metaphor of the "lago del cor":

Allor fu la paura un poco queta
che nel lago del cor m'era durata
la notte ch'i' passai con tanta pietà.
(*Inf.* 1.19–21)

It is striking how almost all translators render the phrase *nel lago del cor* with virtual uniformity as "in the lake of my heart," or a simple variation of these words.⁵ We know that often a single word in Italian can produce a variety of equivalent expressions in English. But in this instance one finds near total agreement among the translators about how this phrase should be rendered. What is even more remarkable, indeed astonishing, is that these translations are all in a fundamental way incorrect: to be blunt, "nel lago del cor" does *not* mean "in the lake of my heart." Indeed, there is no lake here at all, no body of water of any kind, because as almost every Italian commentator from Boccaccio down to the present day makes clear, the word *lago* means "receptacle," "basin," "vat," "vessel," "cistern," "ditch," and, in the context of describing Dante's heart, a "chamber" or "reservoir." In other words, *lago* refers to the cavity of the heart and not to the body of liquid that fills the heart's cavity, the container, not what is contained.⁶ The word derives from the Latin word *lacus*, which means "opening," "hollow," "cavity," "basin," "tank," "tub," and, in a sense that subsequently developed out of this primary definition, a container filled with water, thus a "lake," "pond," or "pool." The Italian vernacular preserved both these connotations. Critics who gloss this metaphor

frequently cite an analogous metaphor at the beginning of the *Vita nova*, where Dante says that when he first saw Beatrice, the life spirit dwelling in the most secret chamber of his heart, “*ne la secretissima camera de lo cuore*,” began to tremble. Boccaccio, among the first of Dante’s early commentators, glosses *lago* as the concavity or repository of the heart’s *spiritelli*, or passions, which are contained in the blood:

è nel cuore una parte concava . . . ed è quella parte ricettacolo di ogni nostra passione: e perciò dice che in quello gli era perseverata la passione della paura a[v]uta.⁷

Benvenuto da Imola’s gloss is among the shortest, but it captures Dante’s meaning precisely: “*idest quae duraverat mihi in profundo cordis*” (that is to say, the [fear] that dwelled deep in my heart).⁸ The commentator Buti⁹ claims that Dante derives his use of the word from medical literature, a view endorsed by Charles S. Singleton, who remarks that “the ‘lake of the heart’ was understood in Dante’s time to mean a concavity or ‘ventricle’ in which the blood gathered.”¹⁰ This reading has been buttressed by some of the most well-regarded Dantists of the twentieth century, among them Giorgio Padoan, Emilio Pasquini, and Robert Durling. Nevertheless, Francesco Mazzoni, in his magisterial commentary on the first three cantos of the *Commedia*, confesses to be unable to locate any medical source for Dante’s metaphor.¹¹

What, then, is the source for the metaphor? Natalino Sapegno, noting Dante’s use of the same expression in the *Rime dubbie* (2.8–9), suggests that “tutto il giro della frase è nel gusto del linguaggio aulico della lirica (cf. *Rime*, 103.45–47).¹² But few such examples are to be found in the literature of courtly love, and in any case such an influence would have no bearing on the narrative events of *Inferno* 1. I suggest that there is a better source for the image, one that is far more pertinent to the moral and psychological condition in which Dante pilgrim finds himself in the *selva oscura*.

The word *lacus* is used frequently in the Old Testament, most commonly in the part known as the Kethuvim, or Writings. This canonical division comprises wisdom literature, namely, the books of Job, Proverbs, and Ecclesiastes; the literature of prayers, chiefly the book of Psalms; historical works, such as Ruth, Esther, and Chronicles; and apocalyptic prophecy, the book of Daniel. Of these thirteen books, none captured the

attention of Christian thinkers and ultimately influenced Christian doctrine more than did the book of Psalms and the book of Daniel. Much of the language we find in the liturgy is drawn from these two books. Anyone familiar with the text of the Requiem mass will recall that the word *lacus* appears at the beginning of the offertorium, a part that occupies the near midpoint of the Mass:

Domine Jesu christe, rex gloriae,
libera animas omnium fidelium defunctorum
de poenis inferni et *de profundo lacu*.
Libera eas de ore leonis,
ne absorbeat eas tartarus,
ne cadant in obscurum. . . . (My italics)

The word *lacus* here designates hell, the deep pit of hell, and it is an equivalent of “tartarus.” It is not a coincidence that in the text of the Requiem mass the familiar metaphor of the lion’s mouth should follow very quickly on its heels. The linkage of pit with lion derives from the book of Daniel, whose hero, like Dante, finds himself at serious odds with the ruling authority of his time. At the very center of its twelve chapters, in chapter six, Daniel is thrown into the lion’s den—*lacum leonum*—from which he miraculously escapes unharmed owing to his steadfast belief in God. This event proves to be the turning point in Daniel’s life, for in the second set of six chapters he becomes a true prophet, whose four visions portend an apocalyptic end of time and resurrection of the dead. But as a metaphor, the word *lacus* in the Bible has two senses: it refers not just to the realm of the dead, but as well to moments of torment and abject misery in life, times of calamity, of darkness, isolation, and despair. In the book of Psalms, David uses the metaphor fairly frequently. Psalm 88 (Vulgate 87), for example, expresses the desperation of a man who finds himself utterly dejected and alone, calling out to God for help.

3 quia repleta est malis anima mea et vita mea *ad infernum* descendit
4 reputatus sum cum descendentibus *lacum* factus sum quasi homo invalidus
5 inter mortuos liber sicut interfecti et dormientes *in sepulchro*
quorum non recordaris amplius et qui a manu tua abscisi sunt
6 posuisti me *in lacu novissimo in tenebris in profundis*.

I am sated with misfortune;
I am at the brink of Sheol.

I am numbered with those who go down to the Pit;
I am a helpless man
Abandoned among the dead,
Like bodies lying in the grave
Of whom You are mindful no more,
And who are cut off from Your care.
You have put me at the bottom of the Pit,
In the darkest places, in the depths.¹³

The psalm is widely interpreted by Judaic scholars as symbolizing the anguish of exile and the desolation experienced by the Hebrews during the long absence from the homeland. The Hebrew word expressing the idea of exile is *Sheol*, which Jerome translates as *lacus* in the Vulgate. In the Old Testament *Sheol* can refer to the “underworld of the dead,” the abode that unites all souls after death irrespective of their moral character, or to a “grave,” the physical space containing a dead soul. From William Tyndale’s version onward, it is usually translated in English as “pit,” or “bottomless pitte,” as in Revelation 9:1–2. It also signifies any place of darkness or threatening experience, and as such it is a metaphor for the state of moral or existential crisis, the sensation of being dead while still alive, of being abandoned by God and unable to climb out of the pit, to escape the threat of death. *Lacus* signifies not simply the threat of death, but a *de profundis* experience signaling a moment of supreme moral peril and imminent death.¹⁴

Ps. 7:15 *Lacum* aperuit et effodit eum et incidet in interitum quem operatus est.
He has dug a pit and deepened it, and will fall into the trap he made.

Ps. 28:1 . . . ne forte tacente te mihi conparer his qui descendunt in *lacum*.
. . . for if you hold aloof from me, I shall be like those gone down to the Pit.

Ps. 30:3 Domine eduxisti de *inferno* animam meam vivificasti me ne descenderem in *lacum*.

O Lord, You brought me from *Sheol*, preserved me from going down into the Pit.

Ps 40:1–2 . . . et audivit clamorem meum et eduxit me de *lacu* famoso.
. . . and heeded my cry. He lifted me out of the miry pit.

Ps. 143:7 . . . ne abscondas faciem tuam a me et conparabor descendentibus in *lacum*.

. . . do not hide your face from me, or I shall become like who descend into the Pit.

It seems almost inescapable that Psalm 88 would not have had a personal significance for Dante. The sixth verse in particular served as an

emblem for any similar human condition, and it frequently appears in predicator literature. Rabanus Maurus cites it in his universal encyclopedia *De rerum naturis* under the heading *De lacis et stagnis* (11.11.8, craters and pools.) In the *Metalogicon* 10.8, under “De tenebris” (dark regions), John of Salisbury calls *lacus* “the darkness that is the sign of death.” Of particular interest is St. Francis of Assisi’s citation of Psalm 87:5–6 in his antiphon “Ad Matutinum, *Antiphona*: Sancta Maria Virgo, Psalmus secundus,” of the Officium Passionis Domini, which he wrote to commemorate Christ’s suffering on Good Friday.¹⁵ Verses 16–17, which compare the psalmist’s terrors to water swirling about him, like “waves” (verse 8), could very well be a source for Dante’s first simile of a man barely escaping death at sea. These citations are in keeping with St. Augustine’s *Enarationes in Psalmos*, which served as a major source for the use of psalms in the later Middle Ages.¹⁶

The term *lacus* appears almost fifty times in the Vulgate Old Testament,¹⁷ and, as I have indicated, significantly at the center not only of the book of Daniel, but also of Jeremiah’s Lamentations, another part of the Writings that had special appeal for Dante, at least since his marking of the death of Beatrice in the *Vita Nova* with the opening words of Lamentations (“Quomodo sedit sola civitas”). The image of the pit and the call to the Lord *de profundis* occurs at the precise center of the Lamentations, in the third of five chapters. Moreover, the five chapters of the book are arranged in a chiasmic pattern that isolates the third and most elaborate chapter at the center. Each chapter has exactly twenty-two verses, and all but the last include an acrostic using each of the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet, in sequence from *aleph* to *tav*, as the first letter of the verse’s first word. Chapter three crowns the pattern with a triple acrostic, so that each Hebrew letter is repeated three times before the next letter is used. This poetic decoration heightens the central experience of the book, the moment of greatest distress and cause for lament, when the narrator, unjustly seized by his enemies, calls out, “My life is fallen in to the pit, and they have laid a stone over me. . . . I have called upon your name, Lord, from the lowest pit.”¹⁸ In Isaiah 38:18–19, *lacus* denotes hell:

Quia non infernus confitebitur tibi neque mors laudabit te non expectabunt qui descendunt in *lacum* veritatem tuam. (Vulgate, my italics)

For the grave cannot praise thee, death can [not] celebrate thee: they that go down into the pit cannot hope for thy truth. (KJV)

The New King James Version retains the Hebrew word for hell, "Sheol," achieving a greater proximity to the original:

For Sheol cannot thank You,
Death cannot praise You;
Those who go down to the pit cannot hope for Your truth.

The example of these verses in Isaiah have a special meaning for Dante in light of the fact that only eight verses earlier, in Isaiah 38:10, Dante found the material source for the first verse of his *Inferno*: "ego dixi in dimidio dierum meorum vadam ad portas inferi"—"nel mezzo del cammin di nostra vita."

The relevance of these citations to the narrative events in *Inferno* 1 should not be lost on us. Indeed, I believe that by using the phrase "lago del cor," Dante means to evoke the idea and image of death, to call to mind the state of desperation he shares with his biblical brethren. The entire first canto is heavily laden with echoes of biblical language and experience, all signifying one and the same threat of imminent peril. Lost in the dark wood, Dante pilgrim effects an initial escape, which is highlighted by the poem's first simile: "E come quei che con lena affannata, / uscito fuor del pelago a la riva. . . ." (22–23). Although the rays of the sun prove sufficient to raise his spirits, any real hope of progress is immediately forestalled by the appearance of three beasts. Perceiving a dim figure in the distance, which proves to be Virgil, he cries out "*Miserere di me . . . qual che tu sii, od ombra od omo certo!*" beseeching mercy in penitential language of Psalms 50:3. We should not underestimate the gravity of the moment for the pilgrim: he is on the brink of death, and he is having not so much a midlife crisis as a near-death experience. The *selva* is so bitter that "poco è più morte" (1.7), and the metaphorical *pelago* from which he escapes is defined as "lo passo / che non lasciò mai persona viva"—the pass that never let a man live who remained there (1.27). But the escape is only temporary, for the three beasts, especially the she-wolf, drive him quickly backward to a *basso loco* of the *selva oscura* (1.61). All these terms are metaphors of the same reality, namely, imminent spiritual death. And as if this were not enough, Lucia introduces two more in summoning Beatrice to Dante's aid in Canto 2. Virgil's narrative recalls Lucia's words to Beatrice, "non vedi tu la morte che 'l combatte / su la fiumana ove 'l mar non ha vanto?" The word *fumana* as a figure for hell on earth, a state

of mortal danger, is consistent with the Hebrew use of the word *Sheol*, which denotes not only the dwelling place of souls *post mortem* but also an individual's alienation from God while in this life. *Selva*, *lago*, *pelago*, *passo*, *basso loco*, *deserto*, *fumana*, *mare*—these words all evoke the aura of death. Moreover, the image of a pit possesses an analogical likeness, in an architectural sense, to the underworld of hell itself and so alerts the reader to an understanding that hell resides within the heart as a moral state of being as much as an otherworld location.

Given a context that is engaged in deploying landscape imagery to express the invisible reality of the pilgrim's state of spiritual fallenness, as well as to associate it analogically with the Fall of Adam and the Crucifixion of Christ, taking the phrase “nel lago del cor” to refer to “the deep pit of the heart” provides a strong degree of support for an understanding of a crucial episode in the poem. I would translate the tercet as follows:

This pacified a little then the fear
That dwelled within the pit deep in my heart
The night I passed in such a state of grief.

This rendering gains further support from a passage that occurs, interestingly, at the very close of the *Commedia*, in St. Bernard's praise of the Virgin Mary at the opening of the final canto.

La tua benignità non pur soccorre
a chi domanda, ma molte fiate
liberamente al dimandar precorre.
In te misericordia, in te pietate,
in te magnificenza, in te s'aduna
quantunque in creatura è di bontate.
Or questi, che da *l'infima lacuna*
de l'universo infin qui ha vedute
le vite spiritali ad una ad una,
supplica a te, per grazia, di virtute
tanto, che possa con li occhi levarsi
più alto verso l'ultima salute.
(*Par.* 33.16–27; my italics)

Bernard's beseeching the Virgin to grant Dante the power to perceive the final vision, the “final healing” or “salvation,” is made in recognition of the distance that Dante pilgrim has traversed on his journey from beginning to end, from bottom to top, from the deepest part of the universe to

the highest realm of heaven, or in the saint's words, "from the deepest pit of the universe to here." The word *lacuna* has the same meaning and connotation as *lago* in "lago del cor," and it derives from the same Latin root, *lacus*. Moreover, it is a *hapax legomenon* in the absolute sense of the term. It is a word occurring not just once in the *Commedia*, but only once in all Dante's writings. These two words frame the full compass of Dante's journey from the dark wood to the petals of the celestial White Rose. Bernard's juxtaposition of the "infima lacuna" of hell with the "ultima salute" of heaven exploits a maneuver typical of the medieval imagination, namely, the binary opposition of good and evil, virtue and vice, as a way of expressing the idea of totality in summary form. I would concede that *lacuna's* echoing of the phrase *lago del cor* cannot easily be heard across the vast expanse of all one hundred cantos, but that is not a necessary precondition for validating the lexical linkage of the two words. Dante's art of verbal expressiveness, as we are well aware, is richly allusive and syncretistic, and it solicits a continual rereading and reconsideration of passages long believed fully explored and well understood.

2. Re(mem)bering Ulysses' Last Journey

The *Commedia* is steeped in water imagery and navigation metaphors. Dante immediately keys the reader's attention to the motif in the poem's first simile (*Inf.* 1.22–27), which depicts a shipwrecked sailor's harrowing reflection on having narrowly escaped death at sea, an image we briefly touched on above. The motif's ruling episode, to which this simile alludes by way of prefiguration, is Ulysses' southern sea adventure that ends in doom with the dramatic capsizing of his ship. Many have spoken eloquently about the fate of the Greek hero in *Inferno* 26, but few have cast more light on the play of rhetoric in Dante's crafting of Ulysses as a mastermind of verbal deception and eloquent dissimulation than Giuseppe Mazzotta.¹⁹ Astute readers of the text are generally quick to perceive that the real rationale behind Dante's exposé of the Greek hero lies in the display of his own superior command of rhetoric and eloquence. As much as Ulysses speaks his own mind, he speaks Dante's as well. The words he utters ultimately comprise the poet's eloquent testimony as district attorney for the prosecution by setting forth a series of multiple charges of indictment against Ulysses.

On this score, I would like to supply an additional, if minor, charge to the docket. My evidence comprises a single verse, *Inferno* 26.100, and since the words of that verse are spoken by Ulysses, we might say that Ulysses engages in a form of self-indictment. The scene introduces Virgil as interlocutor for Dante pilgrim, who, though extremely eager to speak with Ulysses, is denied an opportunity to speak to him directly. Once Ulysses begins to speak, he holds the floor until the canto comes to a close. His first word, “Quando,” at the end of verse 90, begins a narrative section of three *terzine* expressing his desire to explore the world, even at the cost of turning his back on his family, all three generations of it still living. Verse 100 pivots on the word “ma,” placing the content of the fifteen previous verses well behind Ulysses and out of his mind, as an irrelevancy, as he propels his narrative forward to the events that most absorb his interest. It is this verse that declares his journey begun, and it is the one verse in the canto, in my view, that most serves to characterize Ulysses’ exemplaristic identity. It is charged with high rhetoric: strong alliteration combined with multiple assonance (*per* / *aperto*; *alto* / *aperto*) and a propulsive cadence:

ma misi me per l’alto mare aperto

And the entire *terzina*:

ma misi me per l’alto mare aperto
sol con un legno e con quella compagna
picciola da la qual non fui diserto.
(26.100–102)







Most any reader attentive to the rhetorical features in poetry will be immediately struck by the verse’s alliterative pattern. Each of the first three words begins with the letter *m*, and a fourth occurrence appears in the penultimate word, *mare*, whose first syllable, I would argue, receives a strong stress, as do the words *me*—“ma misi *me*,” with the “me” bearing all the weight of Ulysses’ arrogant self-centeredness—and the obligatory tenth syllable, *-per-* in “aperto.” The verse is an *endecasillabo a minore*, with stresses on the fourth, eighth (or seventh), and tenth syllables. The verse could probably be also read as a *maiore*, with stresses on the second, sixth, and tenth syllables. But I would argue that the hero’s vainglory, which has already induced him to punctuate the first seven verses of his speech with

no fewer than three instances of *mi* and *me*, two appearing at the beginning of a verse, obliges us to place the major stress on the fourth syllable, *me*—"ma misi *me*"—and the secondary stress on *mare*, the sea, which itself is a metaphor of Ulysses' fate and is virtually synonymous with his notion of self. And there is the neat linkage of the last word of the verse, *aperto*—and "*mare aperto*" means the open or high seas, as does "*pelago*"—with the last word of the Ulysses' speech, "*infin che 'l mar fu sovra noi richiuso*" (142), which not only closes what was opened at the beginning of the sea voyage but represents the fall of the hero from high to low: "*a la quarta levar la poppa 'n suso / e la prora ire in giù, com' altrui piacque . . .*" (140–41). Dante finds more than one way to hoist Ulysses with his own petard.

Although the alliteration, which features four words out of seven with an initial *m*, is unusually pronounced, no critic took note of the verse's high rhetoric until Francesco Torraca observed, in 1905, that the three *a*'s of "*Alto mare aperto*"—two stressed and in the initial position, one unstressed in an assonantal position—seemed to him to "disclose to the imagination the immense expanse of the ocean's waters."²⁰

I wonder how he thought three *a*'s could produce such an effect, but I wonder more why he had nothing to say about the far more prominent rhetorical feature of the four alliterated *m*'s in the verse. If one traces the Italian letter-based alphabet back to its origins and considers in particular the origin of the letter *m*, one discovers something very interesting indeed. Italian uses virtually the same alphabet as Latin, which derived from the Greek alphabet. Greek, Arabic, and Hebrew formed their alphabets by appropriating the letters of the Phoenician alphabet, which was the only existing alphabet in the Middle East region around the year 1050 BCE.²² The letter *m* in Latin derives from the Greek *mu* (μ); in early Hebrew the letter is *mem* (מ); in early Arabic it is *mim* (م, isolated form). This is not to mention that almost every other language from 2000 BCE down to 200 CE retains virtually the same sound and image: the *m* in Aramaic, Sumerian, and Coptic, all descended from the same origin, the Phoenician letter *m*, pronounced "mem," which was a pictograph meaning "water" (as it did in Proto-Canaanite and Ugaritic before it), precisely because it captures the image of water in its written form, as a series of wavy lines, or oscillations, depicting the waves of the sea.²²

That representation is retained visually in Latin and Italian, so that Dante could easily have designed the verse "*ma misi me per l'alto mare*

Egyptian hieroglyph "N"	Proto-Semitic M	Phoenician M	Etruscan M	Greek Mu	Roman M
					

aperto” to portray the waves of the high seas across which Ulysses sailed. One can argue that the rhythm of the verse depicts the surge and ebb of the waves: that is, it can be read as a straight series of five ups and downs: “ma MI si ME per LAL to MA rea PER to,” or as I prefer, as two hemistichs of four syllables each, plus the final three, mimicking the furrowing of the waves in a broader undulation: “ma misi ME || per LAL to ma | re a PER to.” An *a maiore* stresses on 4 – 8 – 10 (or 4 – 6 – 10). In either instance, the cadence mirrors content in the rhythmic swell and drop of the successive syllables. As Ulysses set out on this journey he is literally wrapping himself in the sign of the sea, he is caught up in the flow of *m*’s that depict the waves that will, in the end, close over him and his “compagna picciola.” Whether Dante knew that the letter *m* had long been linked to the image and the idea of water cannot be determined with certainty, but he did know from Isidore’s *Etymologies* that Latin and Italian had derived their letters from the Phoenician alphabet, and he was familiar with the letters of the Hebrew alphabet, at least in their transliterated form, from the Vulgate Bible.²³ Even without the benefit of complete knowledge of the letter’s origins he could easily see that its shape depicted the likeness of waves of water. Moreover, he knew that flowing waters were a metaphor for the virtue of rhetorical eloquence, not only because he knew Proverbs 18:4 (“The words of a man’s mouth [are as] deep waters, [and] the wellspring of wisdom [as] a flowing brook”) but also because he himself had employed it to describe the extraordinary poetical power of Virgil in *Inferno* 1.79–80: “Or se’ tu quel Virgilio e quella fonte / che spandi di parlar sì largo fiume?” To the list of elements in Canto 26 compiled by Mazzotta to show that its primary concern is rhetoric, we may add the image of the sea waves.²⁴ The sea is Ulysses’ lexicon of words that he deploys as a reservoir of deceit designed to achieve objectives for personal gain.

It might be argued that Dante only had euphonics in mind when he alliterated four words beginning with *m* or that there must surely be other examples of verses in which that letter predominates without Ulysses or water being present. But at least two other passages featuring the letter *m*

and seascape imagery reinforce the idea that verse 100 encapsulates a figurative portrait of Ulysses. No character in the *Commedia* so fascinates and simultaneously traumatizes Dante as does Ulysses. He is never far from Dante's thoughts in the poem, and Dante adverts to the Greek hero at least once in each canticle. In *Purgatorio* 19, the Siren invades Dante's early morning dream boasting of her seductive power and singing words of blandishment:

“Io son,” cantava, “io son dolce serena,
che ’ marinari in mezzo mar dismago;
tanto son di piacere a sentir piena!
Io volsi Ulisse del suo cammin vago
al canto mio; e qual meco s’ausa,
rado sen parte; sì tutto l’appago!”
(*Purg.* 19.19–24)

Once again, remarkably, we find a verse with four *m*'s, three linked by alliteration and one by an assonance that occupies the tonic position, the strongest beat in hendecasyllabic verse. The Siren lures her prey by singing the song of the sea's sweet charm and claims to have waylaid the great Ulysses, who is named in verse 22. And in *Paradiso* 26.62–63, Dante pilgrim deploys a nautical metaphor in recalling his own moral shipwreck and subsequent rescue through belief in Christ's redemption and his own hope of eventual salvation in the afterlife, in a similar patterning of alliteration of the letter *m*:

tratto *m'hanno* del *mar* de l'amor torto,
e del diritto *m'han* posto a la riva.

In three separate instances, remarkably, Dante highlights the metaphor of the peril encountered in sea travel with the repetition of the letter that both begins the word *mare* and also depicts the shape of its waves.²⁵ Only one other verse achieves a similar kind of saliency, and Dante devotes it to describing his inability to recapture the sweetness of Beatrice's smile upon entering the Empyrean and the acknowledgment that his poetic powers lack the requisite sufficiency to put into words a narrative of his experience for the rest of his journey in Paradise. It is a verse of sublime beauty, marked by high rhetoric (five of eleven syllables begin with the letter *m*) to consecrate an epiphanic moment in the poem: *la mente mia da*

me medesimo scema (Par. 30.27).²⁷ It marks the climax in Dante's recapitulation of his entire life as a lover of Beatrice ("dal primo giorno ch'i' vidi il suo viso / in questa vita, infino a questa vista" [30.28–9]), with the stream of *m*'s expressing both the unbroken duration of his affection ("non m'è il seguire al mio cantar preciso" [30.30]) and the broad expanse of time from his love's inception to the present. This context is surely quite different from those linking Ulysses to the sea, but in one way perhaps it is not so different, since in each instance the sequence of *m*'s portrays the idea of expanse, of duration in time or distance through space.

3. Adam's "Apple"

I know of no figure of speech that expressly designates a persistent repetition of a single letter in successive words or lines of poetry for the example I have in mind to discuss next. To call the effect an instance of assonance would account for only part of the pattern that Dante creates with a single repeated letter. Assonance depends on the repetition of a vowel preceded or followed by different consonants, usually in the stressed syllables of adjacent words. The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines its primary sense as "resemblance or correspondence of sound between two words or syllables." The example of the vowel sequence I have in mind has a far more pronounced effect, one that calls attention to itself in ways that go beyond similarity of sound. Strangely, despite its stark obviousness, no critic, ancient or modern, has drawn the reader's attention to it, as far as I know.

In *Paradiso* 26, just after completing his examination on the nature of charity with St. John, Dante pilgrim encounters Adam, the first created human soul. With a grand rhetorical flourish, Dante apostrophizes his earliest ancestor with these words:

E cominciai: "O pomo che maturo
solo prodotto fosti, o padre antico
a cui ciascuna sposa è figlia e nuro,
divoto quanto posso a te supplico
perché mi parli: tu vedi mia voglia,
e per udirti tosto non la dico."

(91–96)

In these two tercets, there are no fewer than twelve instances of the letter *o*, with all four of the remaining vowels appearing in only eight

instances.²⁷ The assemblage of so many *o*'s creates a sound of majestic solemnity, of magnificent awe befitting the moment—indeed, Dante seems to intone his request to Adam on the very highest rhetorical level, out of a deep sense of respect for humankind's first father, the noblest member of his race because he is the only human to have been created directly by the hand of God. But Adam's nobility is, I believe, only partly the reason for the repetition of the letter most qualified, by virtue of its sound, to express a lofty apostrophe. Dante invokes Adam twice, initially as *pomo maturo*, "mature fruit," a phrasing that sounds initially rather strange, even despite the logic behind the image. The word *pomo* here means fruit, not apple, and its meaning comes into view only once we consider that the letter *o* expresses the very shape of a piece of round fruit, an apple, plum, or pear, which Adam is said to be. The roundness of the repeated letter *o* in these two tercets serves as a visual metaphor that unites sound, image, and idea. But what is in play here is not simply the round letter *o* miming the round fruit: the round *o* is also a visual metaphor for earth, the globe given to humankind as a its residence. The letter evokes a connection with the word for world in Latin, *orbis*, and with *oceanus*, words that signify circle and world encompassing waters, respectively.²⁸ Adam himself is an *o* since he is the fruit that gives birth to all human beings and makes him the "padre antico / a cui ciascuna sposa è figlia e nuro" (26.92–93). Throughout the *Commedia* his identity is correlated with the ontogeny of fruit: the part of mankind that falls into Hell is called "il mal seme d'Adamo" (*Inf.* 3.115). Moreover, Adam's very name in Hebrew, *ha-adamah*, means "earth" or "ground," and by extension "earthborn" or "humankind," very much as the word for "man" in Latin, *homo*, derives from *humus*, meaning "earth," "ground," or "soil," a word that generates the cognates "humility," "humble," and the like.²⁹

It should not surprise us that Dante would think of the name Adam conceptually as representing the earth, the entire globe, nor that a series of *o*'s might express in imagistic terms its metaphoric identity. The idea perhaps defies articulation in words, but is no less valid on that account. Dante prepares us, in a way, for this striking metaphor of Adam as fruit and as the world by means of a single letter, when at the beginning of the canto he declares, taking words from the book of Revelation, that God is alpha and omega of the court of heaven: "Lo ben che fa contenta questa corte, / Alfa e O è di quanta scrittura / mi legge Amore o lievemente o forte" (26.16–18). It may not be fanciful to conceive of this *o* as signifying

the completed alphabet, and hence the idea of totality, but also rounded completeness of the universe.

The idea that Adam signified the world was one which theologians had various ways of allegorizing. Augustine is one of several thinkers to link his name to the four corners of the world:

Now Adam's name, as I have said more than once means in Greek the whole world. For there are four letters A,D,A,M, and with the Greeks the four corners of the world have these initial letters . . . Adam is thus scattered throughout the globe.³⁰

In Greek the four letters of Adam's name are the initial letters of words ἀνατολή (*anatolē*, "east"), δῆσις (*dysis*, "west"), μεσημβρία (*mesēmbria*, "south"), and ἄρκτος (*arktos*, "north").

Augustine reprises the idea in *In Evangelium Ioannis tractatus centum viginti quatuor* 10.12:

Quid ergo sibi vult numerus quadragenarius senarius? Interim ipse Adam quia per totum orbem terrarum est, audistis iam hesterno die in quatuor litteris graecis quatuor verborum graecorum. Si enim ista verba quatuor scribas sub invicem, id est, nomina quatuor partium mundi, Orientis, Occidentis, Aquilonis et Meridiani, quod est totus orbis; (unde dicit Dominus a quatuor ventis collecturum se electos suos, cum venerit ad iudicium): si enim facias ista quatuor nomina graeca ἀνατολή, quod est Oriens; δῆσις, quod est Occidens; ἄρκτος, quod est Septentrio; μεσημβρία, quod est Meridies: Anatole, dysis, arctos, mesembria, capita verborum Adam habent (10.12)³¹

What does the number forty-six signify? You learned yesterday that Adam is present throughout the world, as is indicated by the initial letters of four words in Greek. Indeed, listing these four words, which are the names of the four parts of the world— east, west, north, and south, that is, the entire world (which is why the Lord says that when he comes to judge the world, he will gather his chosen from the four winds)—if we list these four words in Greek: *anatole*, east; *dysis*, west; *arktos*, north; *mesembria*, south, from their initials we obtain the name of "Adam."

Dante's *Commedia* is a visual text, to be read as one was taught in the Middle Ages to read the book of nature, as a search for spiritual meaning hidden among the physical realities of God's creation. Not only must readers seek out signs, they must also learn the codes of grammar and syntax that govern access to truth and direct the mind toward appropriate acts of interpretation. Many critics, for example, are convinced that by

presenting Adam as a “pomo” Dante must be adverting to Adam’s sinful eating of the apple in Eden, despite the fact that Adam is presented as the very last and therefore the most virtuous human soul Dante meets inside the physical paradise, with only the angels residing above him. I believe Singleton goes astray in objecting to Dante’s choice of metaphor when he comments that “one would think that since Adam’s great sin was by way of a ‘pomo’ the term might be avoided in his presence!”³² This reading misconceives the proper theological matrix of meaning. The fruit of Adam, which produces every seed of humankind, corresponds to the fruit of the Virgin’s womb, Christ, the Second Adam, the redeemer of humankind and source of all happiness, the fulfillment of earthly happiness sought after as “quel dolce pome che per tanti rami / cercando va la cura de’ mortali” (*Purg.* 27.115–16).³³ The metaphors of fruit, garden, and vegetation that pervades the Earthly Paradise in Purgatory returns in the highest spheres of Paradise, where every human soul is a frond of the plant of humanity whose gardener is God:

Le fronde onde s’infronda tutto l’orto
de l’ortolano eterno, am’ io cotanto
quanto da lui a lor di bene è porto.”
(*Par.* 26.64–66)

Coming only thirty verses before Adam is presented, this tercet, with its copious wordplay (*fronde / onde / infronde*; *orto / ortolano*; *tanto / quanto*; *lor / porto*) and striking profusion of the vowel *o* (which accounts for nearly half of all its vowels), aptly prepares for the presentation of Adam.

The three passages I have discussed testify to Dante’s extraordinary mastery of the art of poetics, of merging sign and symbol, of harmonizing sound with image and theme, and of compressing meaning into words and phrases with astonishing concision. They are also instructive in showing us why translations into English are like piano transcriptions of symphonies, or, as Cervantes put it, like examining the pattern on a tapestry from the wrong side. For a poem that is as polysemous as the *Commedia*, to read in anything but the original means losing access to the pageantry of its poetry.

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NOTES

1. Mazzotta, *Dante, Poet of the Desert* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1979), ix.
2. Original versions include Jean and Robert Hollander (New York: Doubleday, 2000), Michael Palma (New York: Norton, 2003), Anthony Esolen (New York: Modern Library, 2002), Ciaran Carson (London: Granta Books, 2003), Robin Kirkpatrick (London: Penguin Classics, 2006), J. G. Nichols (London: Hesperus Press, 2007), Tom Simone (Newburyport, Mass: Focus Publishing, 2007), Sean O'Brien (London: Macmillan, 2008), Stanley Lombardo (Indianapolis, Ind: Hackett, 2009), and John Lambert (Peterborough, UK: Scripsi, 2010). A free translation-adaptation by Marcus Sanders and Doug Harvey appeared in 2004 (San Francisco: Chronicle Books). The preceding decade saw the appearance of versions by Peter Dale (London: Anvil Press Poetry, 1996), Robert Durling (New York: Oxford, 1997), Robert Pinsky (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1994), Elio Zappulla (New York: Vintage, 1998). Allen Mandelbaum's version for Bantam Books has been in print since 1980.
3. Mark Musa appeared in 1971 (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1971, and later Penguin Classics (London, 2002). John Ciardi's translation, first published in 1954, has been reprinted by Signet Classics (New York, 2001).
4. The Longfellow translation has been reprinted by Matthew Pearl and Lino Pertile for Modern Library (New York, 2003) and by Peter Bondanella for Barnes & Noble (New York, 2003).
5. Here is a sample of fairly recent renderings of the phrase: Pinsky (1994), "in my heart's lake"; Elio Zappulla (1998), "in my poor heart's lake"; Mandelbaum (1980), "the lake within my heart"; Ciaran Carson (2002), "so was the lake of fear in me subdued"; John Ciardi (1954), "whose agony had wracked the lake of my heart"; Esolen (2002), "within the waters of my heart"; Peter Dale (1996), "that on my heart's sea gathered more and more."
6. It is strikingly ironic that many older translations are actually more reliable than the recent ones. Henry Cary (1806) captures the sense well with "in my heart's recesses," as does Lawrence White (1948) with "wellsprings of my heart." Among the moderns, only Allan Gilbert (1969)—"bottom of my heart"—and Patrick Creagh (1989)—"the hollow of my heart"—reflect the original sense with some degree of accuracy.
7. "È nel cuore una parte concava, sempre abbondante di sangue, nel quale, secondo l'opinione d'alcuni, abitano li spiriti vitali, e di quella, siccome di fonte perpetuo, si ministra alle vene quel sangue, e il calore, il quale per tutto il corpo si spande; et è quella parte ricettacolo di ogni nostra passione" (*Esposizioni* 1.1.16).
8. Cited from the Dartmouth Dante Project, <http://dante.dartmouth.edu>.
9. "Questo dice, perchè nel cuore umano è una concavità vacua quanto all'apparenza. Ma qui dicono li fisici stare li spiriti vitali, e quivi sono le nostre passioni mentali." [He says this because the human heart is in regard to appearance an empty cavity. But according to physicians this is where the vital spirits reside, and as well our human emotions.] Cited from the Dartmouth Dante Project.
10. Charles S. Singleton, *Inferno*, vol. 2, *Commentary* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1970), 7.
11. Mazzoni, *Saggio di un nuovo commento alla "Divina Commedia": Inferno – Canti I – III* (Florence: Sansoni, 1967), 74: "Ho cercato se la metafora non venisse a Dante da testi medico-fisici, ma con poco frutto." The only reference in a medical document he is able to cite comes from a text published in 1601.
12. Dante Alighieri, *Opere minori*, 1/1 (Milan: Ricciardi, 1984), 449.
13. Psalm 88 (87), my italics. The translation is taken from the *Jewish Study Bible*, ed. Adele Berlin and Masrc Zvi Brettler (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 1380.
14. Translations taken from the King James version. My italics in the Vulgate text.
15. "Aestimatus sum cum descendentibus in lacum, factus sum sicut homo sine adiutorio inter mortuos liber." Ps. 87.5–6a: I am counted with them that go down into the pit: I am as a man [that hath] no strength free among the dead.

16. Psalm 88, Commentary, 3: "Lastly, the very thing said by our Savior on the Cross, 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do' (Luke 23:34), is expressed in this [87th] Psalm below, 'I am counted as one of them that go down into the pit' (ver. 4): by them who knew not what they were doing, when they imagined that He died like other men, subjected to necessity, and overcome by it. The word "pit" is used for the depth of woe or of Hell." Psalm 88, Commentary, 5. "They laid Me in the lowest pit" [*de lacu novissimo*, 88:6], that is, the deepest pit. For so it is in the Greek. But what is the lowest pit, but the deepest woe, than which there is none more deep? Whence in another Psalm it is said, 'He lifted me out of the miry pit' [*eduxit me de lacu famoso de luto caeni*, 40:3]." Text cited from <http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/jod/augustine.html>; the Latin text is available at <http://www.augustinus.it/index2.htm>.

17. The King James uses "pit" nearly one hundred times to translate the same word in the original Hebrew, בֹּר, which means cistern, pit, or well. It first appears in Genesis 37:24–29, where it signifies the well into which Joseph is cast by his brothers. On this occasion Jerome translates the word as "cisterna."

18. Lam. 3: 53: "SADE lapsa est in *lacu* vita mea et posuerunt lapidem super me."

19. See his essay "Poetics of History: *Inferno* XXVI." In *Diacritics*, No. 2 (Summer 1975), 37–44.

20. "Alto mare aperto, tre *a*, le prime due percosse dall'accento, par che dischiudano all'immaginazione la distesa immensa delle acque marine." Cited from the DDP online.

21. The Phoenician alphabet derived from the 22 letter script of Proto-Canaanite (also known as Proto-Sinaitic), extant circa 1800–1050 BCE.

22. For a useful recent discussion of the letter's origin, see David Sacks, *Letter Perfect* (New York: Broadway Books, 2003), 233–36.

23. See *Etymologiae* 1.3.5, where Isidore cites Lucan's verses crediting the Phoenicians with the invention of the alphabet: "Phoenices primi, famae si creditur, ausi / mansuram rudibus vocem signare figures" (*De bello civile*, 3.220–21). The Book of Lamentations and a number of Psalms contain acrostics based on the sequence of letters in the Hebrew alphabet. It is likely that Dante would have know that *mem* signified water. See, for example, Psalm 37.

24. *Dante, Poet of the Desert*, 71.

25. There are several instances of the pattern of three alliterated *m* words coupled with an internal syllable featuring the letter, e.g., "di meritar mi scema la misura" (*Par.* 4.21).

26. One other verse contains four words beginning with *m*, but none of the syllables is accented so that no poetic effect is created: "non mi far dir mentr' io mi maraviglio" (*Purg.* 23.59).

27. The six verses contain twenty-four *o*'s versus a sum of forty-six instances for all four other vowels, so that *o* makes up more than a third of all instances.

28. Isidore, *Etymologiae*, 9.2.1: "Orbis a rotunditate circuli dictus, quia sicut rota est; unde brevis etiam rotella orbiculus appellatur. Undique enim Oceanus circumfluens eius in circulo ambit fines." Ocean derives from the Greek word signifying the outer sea as opposed to an inner sea such as the Mediterranean Sea.

29. *Ibid.*, 7.6.4: "Adam, sicut beatus Hieronymus tradit, homo sive terrenus sive terra rubra interpretatur. Ex terra enim facta est caro, et humus hominis faciendi materies fuit."

30. Giuseppe Mazzotta first drew my attention to the passage in Augustine, PL 37, col. 1236 (cf. PL 71, col. 786; see *Dante, Poet of the Desert*, 116).

31. The Pseudo-Cyprian tract *De duobus montibus Sina et Sion* also articulates the connection: "He received a name from God; the Hebrew Adam in Latin means 'land made flesh' in that out of the four cardinal points of the globe he grasped in his fist, as is written: I have measured the heaven by my palm and I have grasped the earth and I have formed the human from all the territories of the earth; he made him in the image of God. [4.2] It was fitting for him to bear this name Adam from these cardinal points of the globe. We find in the scriptures that through each of the cardinal points of the globe four stars have been assigned on each of the cardinal points: first the star of the east called Anatole, second of the west called Dysis, third the star of the north, Artus, fourth the southern star is called Mesembrion. From the names of the stars, four in number, take each of the initial letters from each of the names of the stars: from the star Anatole A, from star Dysis D, from star Artus A, from

star Mesembrion M; in these cardinals letters you have the name ADAM.” Trans. Stephen C. Carlson, http://docs.google.com/Doc?id=dhmv9cqg_1c98gtn.

32. C. S. Singleton, *Paradiso*, vol. 2, *Commentary* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1975), 419.

33. See Luke 1:42: “Et exclamavit voce magna et dixit benedicta tu inter mulieres et benedictus fructus ventris tui,” verses that are calqued on Deut. 28:4: “Benedictus fructus ventris tui et fructus terrae tuae fructusque iumentorum tuorum greges armentorum et caulae ovium tua rum” (cf. Deut. 7:13).

Dante's Monsters: Nature and Evil in the *Commedia*

CHRISTOPHER LIVANOS

While monsters appear everywhere in the *Inferno* and are abundant in the allegories at the ending of *Purgatorio*, Dante does not actually use the term *mostro* until the close of *Purgatorio* 32, which also marks the last occurrence of unambiguously monstrous figures in the *Commedia*. The verse “simile mostro visto ancor non fue” (*Purg.* 32.147) is especially intriguing when taken in the context of all the monstrosities we have encountered thus far in the first two canticles. On one level, we ought to take the passage to mean that Dante is speaking of the beast of the Apocalypse, which the world has not yet seen but will see at the end of time. The passage is striking because we *have* in fact seen similar monsters—unnatural hybrids, personifications of vice, and embodiments of human fears—throughout the first sections of the *Commedia*. None of these creatures has, however, been explicitly labeled a *mostro*. Dante reserves the term until the end of *Purgatorio* 32, inviting the reader to reflect on what is unique about the monster we encounter there, which comprises the chariot transformed into a multiheaded, multihorned monster and, unhitched from the griffin that allegorically represents Christ, runs off into the woods with a prostitute.

In his article “Il Minotauro, la ‘matta bestialitade’ e altri mostri,” Achille Tartaro discusses medieval interpretations of Aristotle’s tripartite division of vice that likely informed Dante’s own division of Hell into realms of incontinence bestiality and fraud.¹ Another important tradition that informed Dante’s understanding of evil is the orthodox notion of evil as the privation of good. In Christian doctrine, evil has no substance in its own right and denotes an utter lack of being. Dante provides the most

eloquent poetic expression of this theological doctrine. As we read *Inferno* and descend into realms where evil increases, reality diminishes. Light disappears, language becomes inarticulate, space narrows, and heat disappears. Tartaro has pointed out that one of the major differences between Dante's Christian teratology and the teratology of a classical poet is that, for Dante, monsters such as the Minotaur, Cerberus, Geryon, and many others are not simply anomalous but diabolical. This is certainly correct, and an important aspect of diabolical evil in Dante's Christian worldview is that it is always in some way deficient.

But unnaturalness, even monstrosity, in Dante's work is not synonymous with evil or deficiency. Nature for Dante is good, but it is not the supreme good that it is for his pagan guide.² Accordingly, monsters in the *Commedia* can be figures either of demonic evil or, in some cases, of transcendent good, as we see in the Griffin near the end of *Purgatorio*. Tartaro has confined his discussion of monsters primarily to the Minotaur and entirely to the *Inferno*. Using his work as a guideline, I will discuss some of the monsters of the *Purgatorio* and attempt a reading of the eagle in *Paradiso* 18–20 as a figure with certain monstrous characteristics. These creatures are monstrous in the sense of being portentous and unnatural, but they are not evil.

Though the term *mostro* is only used of the transformed chariot in Canto 32 of *Purgatorio*, monsters appear in every circle of the *Inferno*, serving a function closely related to the etymological meaning of the term. Dante's use of the monstrous as a literary device and of the noun *mostro* are shaped by Latin etymology, and all the monstrous figures in the *Commedia*, whether they are specifically labeled as such or not, reflect the nuanced meanings of the Latin term *monstrum* and the complex belief systems of ancient and medieval teratology. One of the meanings of the word *monstrum* is "sign," so the monsters appearing near the entrance of each new section of Hell function as emblems of the sin being punished therein. Cerberus functions as a sign announcing entry to the circle of gluttony, and, as we continue winding our way down through *Inferno*, other monsters have similar roles in their respective realms.³ Monsters are usually encountered when the protagonists first enter a new circle of Hell and before they engage in dialogue with its inhabitants. Cerberus acts as a sign marking Ciaccio and his fellow gluttons, and Geryon as an emblem of fraud marking all those condemned to Malebolge even before Dante meets any of them. These examples show that for Dante the connection

between *monstrum* and *monstro* is not an obscure etymological point but a fundamental matter in the meaning of the monstrous in literature. *Monstrum* originally had negative connotations, meaning an “ill omen” and this negative sense continues in the later meanings the word acquired. However, in the Vulgate, *monstrum* can simply mean “a wondrous thing.” In the book of Wisdom, the word is even applied to the works of God.⁴ This positive connotation that the word can have in later Latin is important in understanding Dante’s use of monsters to represent not only deprivation and evil but also transcendence and good. Equally important is the relation of *monstrum* to *moneo*, “to warn” or “to admonish.” All of Dante’s monsters are signs, and those in the *Inferno* are also warnings. We may look at them on the most basic level as warnings of what awaits in Hell, and, just as importantly, they are warnings of what human beings may become.

Human beings create monsters for two reasons: to embody human fears and to define communal values. The latter occurs normally, but not always, through negative example. One instance still capable of evoking visceral disgust in the modern reader is the story of the Minotaur’s origin. The Minotaur is one of the more illustrative monster narratives alluded to in the *Commedia*: “L’infamia di Creti era distesa / che fu concetta ne la falsa vacca” (*Inf.* 12.12–13), we are told in reference to Pasiphae’s seduction of the Cretan bull and subsequent delivery of monstrous offspring. *Monstrum* in its basic sense refers to the birth of a deformed animal and the importance such births had as omens in Roman divination practices. Pasiphae’s child is certainly a monster in this historical sense. As a marker that Dante and Virgil have entered the seventh circle, the Minotaur is a *monstrum* in the sense of “sign.” Most importantly, his very existence is a sign of what *bestialitade* means for Dante: a mingling of the human and the irrational, whether through something as simple as allowing animalistic and irrational emotions to cloud one’s innate human reason or through more exotic transgressions such as Pasiphae’s. Finally, and on a simpler level, the Minotaur is a monster because he is scary. As Virgil guides Dante farther into the lowest reaches of Hell, where the Roman poet’s reasoned intellect no longer serves as an infallible guide, Dante feels fear and becomes aware that his guide is no longer in full control of the surroundings, as he had been in the upper parts of Hell. While some have seen the minotaur as a transitional figure, the first gatekeeper that Virgil cannot manipulate, Tartaro argues that Virgil does in fact control the

Minotaur as he has controlled the other infernal monsters. Virgil's taunts cause the Minotaur to be consumed with rage; in effect, Virgil turns the monster's own vice against itself and enables the two poets to escape his threat. Even so, Dante is scared, and one of the functions of the monsters, which we should not let our theory make us forget, is to scare people.

While physical violence at the hands of the Minotaur is clearly Dante's central fear in the passage, the very existence of such a monster causes a further feeling of dread. The hybrid monster is the union of two categories that do not normally mix.⁵ The union of bull and man symbolizes violation of one of the most basic sexual taboos. Dante's fear before the Minotaur is deepened by the sense that the monster represents an affront to one of the most basic tenets of his moral system. Yet not all hybrids in the *Commedia* are negatively portrayed, the greatest example of a divinely good hybrid being the griffin who appears in Canto 29 of *Purgatorio*. The supranatural union of the human and divine is just as unnatural as the union of man and beast. The griffin, with its lion body representing Christ's human nature and its eagle forequarters representing his divine nature, constitutes an unnatural hybrid. Dante follows biblical precedent for viewing unnatural mixture positively. Discussing the grafting of gentiles into the salvation community, Paul writes to the Romans, "Nam si tu ex naturali excisus es oleastro et contra naturam insertus es in bonam olivam quanto magis hii secundum naturam inserentur suae olivae" (Romans 11:24).⁶ The same term *contra naturam* reappears in a more predictably negative sense elsewhere in Romans, when Paul uses it to condemn homosexual practices. Both uses of the term refer to violations of purity codes. Paul sees the inclusion of gentiles as a necessary break with a purity code separating gentile and Jew that has served its purpose and has no place after the coming of Christ. The admonitions against homosexuality, in contrast, use *contra naturam* in a negative sense. Paul's conception of the unnatural as sometimes harmful yet at other times necessary for salvation resembles Dante's own paradoxical conception of nature and its relation to good and evil.

The only occurrence of the term *mostro* in the *Commedia* is in reference to the Christian church as represented by the chariot. By Canto 32 of the *Purgatorio*, we are really just about done with monsters. The only creature that could arguably be called a monster in *Paradiso* is the eagle of Cantos 18–20, which we will discuss later. After reading about all the monstrous legions of Hell, then about the griffin and other allegorical representations

in the later cantos of *Purgatorio*, we hear of the chariot, which has been transformed into a multiheaded creature: “simile mostro visto ancor non fue.” After we have marveled at the strange spectacles of Hell, Dante seems to be telling us that the real monsters are ourselves.

Looking into the imagery surrounding the chariot's transformation at the end of *Purgatorio* 32, we see that the theme of a monstrous birth and conception, common to many monster narratives and already discussed here in reference to the Minotaur, also figures in Dante's description of the chariot-turned-beast. Just as the Minotaur, centaurs, and similar hybrid monstrosities are the products of illicit sexual unions, the chariot's transformation into a monstrous creature likewise occurs following a passage in which Dante uses sexually suggestive language. A dragon surfaces from the earth between the chariot's wheels in a passage suggesting that the chthonian realm, which Dante has recently visited, is a sort of monstrous womb. Next the dragon is compared to a wasp that stings the chariot with its tail,⁷ indicating a demonic impregnation. Among the many senses in which the beastly chariot is a monster, one of the most significant is that it is a deformed creature born of an unnatural union. Christ, likewise, was born of an unnatural union.⁸ We have already seen that Paul is one authority who implies that the unnatural can be either positive or negative depending on the circumstances; and Dante would have known the passage where Thomas Aquinas develops the idea fully in the *Summa theologiae*.⁹

Like the griffin, which symbolizes Christ, and the Minotaur, which serves as an emblem of bestial violence, all of Dante's hybrids are a mixture of the human and either the divine or the demonic. This is essentially what differentiates Dante from his pagan antecedents. In ancient literature, the hybrid is monstrous because it represents the mixture of two species that are both natural in their own right but that nature intended to keep separate. The hybrid's monstrous behavior serves as a warning against the mingling of categories that society's governing purity code has decreed must be kept separate. Pasiphae's passion causes her to disregard the fundamental distinction between man and beast. In another example from mythology, Myrrha's incest with Cinyras blurs the distinction between two of the most fundamental social relations: that between parent and child and that between two spouses. Adonis, the result of Myrrha's transgression, is born under unusual circumstances (from a tree) and his own sexuality is as disordered as the union that brought him into

existence. In all of the classical stories of monstrous births, separations that exist within nature are disregarded and the monster thus created is a stigma marking the criminal, as Dante illustrates when he calls the Minotaur “l’infamia di Creti.” Thomas Aquinas taught that demonic temptation is ultimately responsible for every sin that man is capable of committing. Thus for Dante, in contrast to his pagan predecessors, monstrous hybridity results not just from a mixture of the natural with the natural but from otherworldly interference in the natural world. Usually these unnatural unions come from evil passions and lead to more evil.

Not all of Dante’s monsters fit into the category of abnormal births resulting from acts of transgression. Sometimes monstrosity is not an innate condition but a punishment for a crime of such magnitude the transgressor is seen to have forfeited his humanity. Forfeiture of humanity is a commonplace in many literary traditions, and the most remarkable example of it in Dante’s *Commedia* occurs in *Inferno* 25, where a thief is assaulted by a serpent and subsumed into its body with the result that the two forms merge to become a six-legged serpentine monster. The thief, who would not respect the boundary between what was his own and what was another’s, is punished according to an apt *contrapasso* by having his human form stolen from him.

Other medieval literary traditions deal in similar terms with crimes that result in the forfeiture of humanity. In the Icelandic *Völsungasaga*, Fafnir is transformed into a dragon after committing patricide. In *Beowulf*, Grendel’s monstrosity is the result of the fratricide committed by his ancestor Cain. This way of reconciling Christian scripture with pagan beliefs in trolls and other monstrous beings was likely inspired by Augustine’s reflection on where monstrous races come from and why God created them. Christian belief in an all-powerful, all-good God raises questions for poets as different as Dante and the *Beowulf* poet that could not arise outside of a Christian worldview. A Christian author must ask why God would allow monsters to exist. Augustine’s thoughts on this topic were influential: “For God, the Creator of all, knows where and when each thing ought to be, or to have been created, because He sees the similarities and diversities which can contribute to the beauty of the whole. But He who cannot see the whole is offended by the deformity of the part, because he is blind to that which balances it, and to which it belongs.” For Augustine, and for all orthodox Christian thinkers, nothing can be evil by nature.¹⁰ What seems deformed to us might not seem so to God.

To the Christian, everything in the world God has created is pure, as St. Peter beheld in a divine vision while in a quandary over whether or not the church should continue to enforce Jewish purity codes. I believe Mary Douglas's theoretical work on purity codes is helpful in understanding literary representations of monsters, especially monstrous hybrids. She argues that all societies construct purity codes based on dividing reality into categories that must never mix. For example, according to Douglas, kosher dietary restrictions view the pig as unclean because it is hooved but does not chew its cud. A swordfish is unclean because it lives in the water but has no scales.¹¹ Douglas's theories have been criticized on the grounds that nobody thinks of a dolphin, for instance, as disgusting although it is a mammal but lives in the sea.¹² Yet Douglas cannot be so readily dismissed. She was concerned not so much with which animals are seen as disgusting as with which are marked as off limits, or "sacred" in the etymological sense, and the idea of eating a marine mammal is indeed repugnant to modern Western cultural norms. The hybrid creatures of Dante's *Inferno* are all associated with violations of their cultures' most basic rules of ritual purity. The Minotaur's origins have been discussed. Centaurs, except for Chiron, are the product of Ixion's intercourse with a cloud image, which he mistook for Hera, hence the name *kent-auros* "to poke the wind." Harpies have their origins in the divine realm, as daughters of Typhon and Echidna, so the normal rules about ritual purity do not apply to their conception; but they are typically portrayed as defilers and contaminators. In Book 3 of the *Aeneid*, Aeneas accuses them of defiling the Trojans' feast. It is possible to read the *Aeneid* with sympathy for the harpies, but such a reading is not possible in Dante's *Inferno* where monsters become diabolical and therefore categorically evil.¹³

After the hybrid monsters we have encountered in *Inferno*, the griffin is a fitting symbol in the earthly paradise not simply because it has two natures, and not even solely because it represents Christ, who is himself the product of an unnatural union. The griffin is an appropriate symbol for Christ, among other reasons, because it is a creature likely to be rejected as monstrous. People who do not know any better will say it is impure. Its existence, like Christ's, is an affront to human notions of purity. One objection to the interpretation of the griffin as an allegory of Christ is that it is inconsistent with the medieval notion of the griffin as a ravenous, bloodthirsty beast, even a symbol of the devil; but perhaps it is

not inappropriate that the creature, like Christ, should be the victim of slander.¹⁴ In any case, just as the Minotaur and the centaurs symbolize transgression against ritual purity, the griffin symbolizes the transcendence of it and a rebirth out of law into grace.

Moving out of the earthly Paradise, Dante begins *Paradiso*, the canticle in which visual spectacle is most important. While Dante believes that the physical body and physical pleasure are good and ought to be enjoyed, his is not a sensuous paradise. Imagery of taste, smell and touch, so common in the earlier canticles, are absent from *Paradiso*.¹⁵ Describing a superhuman reality in human language is difficult enough, and Dante sets himself an even more herculean task by using only two-fifths of the palate of sensory images that were available to him in the first two canticles. As a result, the two remaining senses are overloaded, really far more than overloaded, as Dante explicitly states in *Paradiso*'s opening verses. The eagle that we first encounter in Canto 18 in the Heaven of Jupiter is not a monster in any conventional sense, although it is certainly an unusual supernatural being made up of many parts. When it speaks, Dante refers to it as a "blessed sign,"¹⁶ just as the eagle is about to narrate the story of the five righteous rulers who make up its eye. Of the five the most remarkable is the Trojan hero Ripheus, who lived a thousand years before Christ in a heathen land but was nonetheless saved through the ineffable mercy of God in a manner which Dante's human reasoning simply cannot comprehend. Ripheus is the most inexplicable presence in *Paradiso*, and he forms part of the most unusual creature we meet in the canticle. The eagle is a complex sign representing the might of the Roman Empire as well as God's grace. In reference to Ripheus, the sign of the eagle warns the reader not to presume to know whom God will or will not save.

Dante's guide through the highest regions of Heaven proves an interesting choice in light of Dante's talent as a fantasist and creator of memorable monsters. In a celebrated letter to William of St. Thierry, Bernard condemns the visual art being constructed in Europe's cathedrals:

In claustris coram legentibus fratribus quid facit illa ridicula monstruositas, mira quaedam deformis formositas, ac formosa deformitas? . . . Videas sub uno capite multa corpora, et rursus in uno corpore capita multa. Cernitur hinc in quadrupede cauda serpentis, illinc in pisce caput quadrupedis. Ibi bestia praefert equum, capram trahens retro dimidium; hic cornutum animal equum gestat posterius. Tam multa denique, tamque mira diversarum formarum ubique varietas apparet, ut magis legere libeat in marmoribus quam in codicibus, totumque diem

occupare singula ista mirando, quam in lege Dei meditando. Proh Deo! si non pudet ineptiarum, cur vel non piget expensarum?¹⁷

Certainly Dante chose Bernard as his final guide for his contemplative spirituality and his devotion to Mary, but we should note that one of the world's great creators of monsters chose one of the world's great critics of the monstrous imagination to complete his journey to salvation. A gradual move away from the monstrous begins when the two poets leave Inferno, continues in the final cantos of *Purgatorio*, and culminates near the close of *Paradiso*, where St. Bernard replaces Beatrice as guide. Fortunately, Dante did not heed his final guide's advice not to create monsters, and he saw that a monster can be a powerful symbol of the worst crimes or the most astonishing acts of good.

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NOTES

1. Achille Tartaro, "Il Minotauro, la 'matta bestialitate' e altri mostri," *Filologia e critica* 17 (1992): 161–86. I wish to thank the participants at the 2007 Dante symposium at the University of Wisconsin in Madison for their feedback. Above all, I owe many thanks to Christopher Kleinhenz for the time and knowledge he has shared.

2. Aquinas articulates the classic Catholic understanding of the goodness of nature in *Summa Theologiae* Ia–IIae q. 71 a. 2 co.: "Respondeo dicendum quod, sicut dictum est, vitium virtuti contrariatur. Virtus autem uniuscuiusque rei consistit in hoc quod sit bene disposita secundum convenientiam suae naturae, ut supra dictum est. Unde oportet quod in qualibet re vitium dicatur ex hoc quod est disposita contra id quod convenit naturae. Unde et de hoc unaquaeque res vituperatur, a vitio autem nomen vituperationis tractum creditur, ut Augustinus dicit, in III de Lib. Arb. Sed considerandum est quod natura uniuscuiusque rei potissime est forma secundum quam res speciem sortitur. Homo autem in specie constituitur per animam rationalem. Et ideo id quod est contra ordinem rationis, proprie est contra naturam hominis inquantum est homo; quod autem est secundum rationem, est secundum naturam hominis inquantum est homo. Bonum autem hominis est secundum rationem esse, et malum hominis est praeter rationem esse, ut Dionysius dicit, IV cap. de Div. Nom. Unde virtus humana, quae hominem facit bonum, et opus ipsius bonum reddit, intantum est secundum naturam hominis, inquantum convenit rationi, vitium autem intantum est contra naturam hominis, inquantum est contra ordinem rationis."

"I answer that, As stated above, vice is contrary to virtue. Now the virtue of a thing consists in its being well disposed in a manner befitting its nature, as stated above. Hence the vice of any thing consists in its being disposed in a manner not befitting its nature, and for this reason is that thing 'vituperated,' which word is derived from 'vice' according to Augustine (*De Lib. Arb.* iii, 14).

But it must be observed that the nature of a thing is chiefly the form from which that thing derives its species. Now man derives his species from his rational soul: and consequently whatever is contrary to the order of reason is, properly speaking, contrary to the nature of man, as man; while whatever is in accord with reason, is in accord with the nature of man, as man. Now 'man's good is

to be in accord with reason, and his evil is to be against reason,' as Dionysius states (*Div. Nom.* iv). Therefore human virtue, which makes a man good, and his work good, is in accord with man's nature, for as much as it accords with his reason: while vice is contrary to man's nature, in so far as it is contrary to the order of reason." *A Summa of the Summa: The Philosophical Passages of St. Thomas*, trans. Peter Kreeft (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1990), 479–80.

3. For correspondences between the Infernal gatekeepers, the realms they guard and the vices they represent, see Christopher Kleinhenz, "Infernal Guardians Revisited: 'Cerberus, il gran vermo,'" *Dante Studies* 93 (1975): 185–99. The most comprehensive treatment of Dante's monsters is Gérard Luciani, *Les Monstres dans "La Divine Comédie"* (Paris: Lettres Modernes, 1975). The topic has most recently been revisited in Patrick Hunt, "Dante's Monsters in the Inferno: Reimagining Classical to Christian Judgment," *Philolog: Classical Connections, Commentary, and Critique* 4 (2010) http://traumwerk.stanford.edu/philolog/2010/04/dantes_monsters_in_the_inferno.html.

4. Book of Wisdom 19.7–8: Nam nubes castra eorum obumbrabat, / et ex aqua quæ ante erat, terra arida apparuit, / et in mari Rubro via sine impedimento, / et campus germinans de profundo nimio: per quem omnis natio transivit quæ tegebatur tua manu, / videntes tua mirabilia et monstra.

5. For a discussion of monstrous hybridity in medieval culture, see David Williams, *Deformed Discourse: The Function of the Monster in Mediaeval Thought and Literature* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1996), especially chapter 4, "Nature Monstrous," 177–227. More theoretical discussions of monstrosity are found in Jeffrey Jerome Cohen, ed., *Monster Theory: Reading Culture* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996). Cohen's essay "Monster Culture (Seven Theses)," 3–25, argues, in postmodern fashion, against a "Unified Theory" to explain monsters and advances instead seven theses, assuring the reader that the list is not meant to be all-encompassing. The theses are 1. The Monster's Body is a Cultural Body, 2. The Monster Always Escapes, 3. The Monster is a Harbinger of Category Crisis, 4. The Monster Dwells at the Gates of Difference, 5. The Monster Polices the Borders of the Possible, 6. Fear of the Monster is Really a Kind of Desire, and 7. The Monster Stands at the Threshold . . . of Becoming. However obliged we may feel to resist unified theories, all seven theses pertain to category crisis, which is overwhelmingly what monsters represent in the Western tradition.

6. "For if you have been cut from what is by nature a wild olive tree and grafted, contrary to nature, into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will these natural branches be grafted back into their own olive tree" (New Revised Standard Version).

7. "Poi parve a me che la terra s'aprìse / tr'ambo le ruote, e vidi uscirne un drago / che per lo carro sù la coda fissè; / e come vespa che ritragge l'ago, / a sé traendo la coda maligna, / trasse del fondo, e gissen vago vago. / Quel che rimase, come da gramigna / vivace terra, da la piuma, offerta / forse con intenzion sana e benigna, / si ricoperse, e funne ricoperta / e l'una e l'altra rota e 'l temo, in tanto / che più tiene un sospir la bocca aperta. / Trasformato così 'l dificio santo / mise fuor teste per le parti sue, / tre sovra 'l temo e una in ciascun canto (*Purg.* 32.130–44).

8. For further discussion of Christs "monstrosity," see Robert Mills, "Jesus as Monster" in Bettina Bildhauer and Robert Mills, ed., *The Monstrous Middle Ages* (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 2003), 28–54.

9. "Respondeo dicendum quod, sicut Ambrosius dicit, in libro de incarnatione, *multa in hoc mysterio et secundum naturam invenies, et ultra naturam*. Si enim consideremus id quod est ex parte materiae conceptus, quam mater ministravit, totum est naturale. Si vero consideremus id quod est ex parte virtutis activae, totum est miraculosum. Et quia unumquodque magis iudicatur secundum formam quam secundum materiam; et similiter secundum agens quam secundum patiens, inde est quod conceptio Christi debet dici simpliciter miraculosa et supernaturalis, sed secundum aliquid naturalis."

"I answer that, As Ambrose says [*De Incarn.* vi]: 'In this mystery thou shalt find many things that are natural, and many that are supernatural.' For if we consider in this conception anything connected with the matter thereof, which was supplied by the mother, it was in all such things natural. But if we consider it on the part of the active power, thus it was entirely miraculous. And since judgment of a thing should be pronounced in respect of its form rather than of its matter: and likewise in respect of its activity rather than of its passiveness: therefore is it that Christ's conception should be

described simply as miraculous and supernatural, although in a certain respect it was natural" (III q. 33 a. 4 co.). Translation by Fathers of the English Dominican Province, cited from newadvent.org.

10. See Augustine, *De civitate Dei* 16.8. The passage is worth quoting here more fully, as its account of monstrous races and anomalous births influenced virtually all subsequent representations of monstrosity in the Latin West: "Quaeritur etiam, utrum ex filiis Noe uel potius ex illo uno homine, unde etiam ipsi extiterunt, propagata esse credendum sit quaedam monstrosa hominum genera, quae gentium narrat historia, sicut perhibentur quidam unum habere oculum in fronte media, quibusdam plantas uersas esse post crura, quibusdam utriusque sexus esse naturam et dextram mammam uirilem, sinistram muliebrem, uicibusque inter se coeundo et gignere et parere; aliis ora non esse eosque per nares tantummodo halitu uiuere, alios statura esse cubitales, quos Pygmaeos a cubito Graeci uocant, alibi quinquennes concipere feminas et octauum uitae annum non excedere. . . . Qualis autem ratio redditur de monstrosis apud nos hominum partibus, talis de monstrosis quibusdam gentibus reddi potest. Deus enim creator est omnium, qui ubi et quando creari quid oporteat uel oportuerit, ipse nouit, sciens uniuersitatis pulchritudinem quarum partium uel similitudine uel diuersitate contextat. Sed qui totum inspicere non potest, tamquam deformitate partis offenditur, quoniam cui congruat et quo referatur ignorat. Pluribus quam quinis digitis in manibus et pedibus nasci homines nouimus; et haec leuior est quam ulla distantia; sed tamen absit, ut quis ita desipiat, ut existimet in numero humanorum digitorum errasse Creatorem, quamuis nesciens cur hoc fecerit. Ita etsi maior diuersitas oriatur, scit ille quid egerit, cuius opera iuste nemo reprehendit."

It is also asked whether we are to believe that certain monstrous races of men, spoken of in secular history, have sprung from Noah's sons, or rather, I should say, from that one man from whom they themselves were descended. For it is reported that some have one eye in the middle of the forehead; some, feet turned backwards from the heel; some, a double sex, the right breast like a man, the left like a woman, and that they alternately beget and bring forth: others are said to have no mouth, and to breathe only through the nostrils; others are but a cubit high, and are therefore called by the Greeks "Pigmies:" they say that in some places the women conceive in their fifth year, and do not live beyond their eighth . . . The same account which is given of monstrous births in individual cases can be given of monstrous races. For God, the Creator of all, knows where and when each thing ought to be, or to have been created, because He sees the similarities and diversities which can contribute to the beauty of the whole. But He who cannot see the whole is offended by the deformity of the part, because he is blind to that which balances it, and to which it belongs. We know that men are born with more than four fingers on their hands or toes on their feet: this is a smaller matter; but far from us be the folly of supposing that the Creator mistook the number of a man's fingers, though we cannot account for the difference. And so in cases where the divergence from the rule is greater. He whose works no man justly finds fault with, knows what He has done. Tr. Marcus Dods, *The City of God*, vol. 2. (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1871), 116–117.

11. Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of concepts of Pollution and Taboo*, 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 1984), 42–58. For an analysis of monstrous figures in religious imagery by an author favorable to Douglas' theories, see Timothy K. Beal, *Religion and Its Monsters*, (New York: Routledge, 2002).

12. Martha Nussbaum, *Hiding From Humanity: Disgust, Shame and the Law* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2004), 91.

13. See Hunt (2010) for further discussion of the harpies.

14. See Williams (1996) on the griffin's rapaciousness (240–241) and on the griffin as a symbol of evil (197).

15. I am grateful to Ronald Martinez for calling to my attention to an exception when Dante speaks with the eagle in *Paradiso* 18–19. See, for example, *Par.* 19.19–27: Così un sol calor di molte brage / si fa sentir, come di molti amori / usciva solo un suon di quella image. / Ond' io appresso: "O perpetui fiori / de l'eterna letizia, che pur uno / parer mi fate tutti vostri odori, / solvetemi, spirando, il gran digiuno / che lungamente m'ha tenuto in fame, / non trovandoli in terra cibo alcuno." It is noteworthy that these three tercets refer to food and to the senses of smell and touch, while most of the *Paradiso* contains only aural and visual imagery. (While "odore" seems here to refer metaphorically to the voices of various speakers, Dante's use of language evoking the scents of flowers

is surely not accidental.) It is beyond the scope of this essay to elaborate in depth on the sensory images in this passage, but we suggest as a topic for further investigation that the use of animal imagery, the presence of a saved pagan, and imagery drawn from all five senses all make this passage unusual within the canticle.

16. “Poi appresso, con l’occhio più acceso, / lo benedetto segno mi rispuose / per non tenermi in ammirar sospeso: / “Io veggio che tu credi queste cose / perch’io le dico, ma non vedi come; / sì che, se son credute, sono ascose” (Par. 20.85–90).

17. “In the cloisters, before the eyes of the brothers while they read—what is that ridiculous monstrosity doing, an amazing kind of deformed beauty and yet a beautiful deformity? . . . You see many bodies under one head and conversely many heads on one body. On one side the tail of a serpent is seen on a quadruped, on the other side the head of a quadruped is on the body of a fish. Over there an animal has a horse for the front half and a goat for the back; here a creature which is horned in front is equine behind. In short, everywhere so plentiful and astonishing a variety of contradictory forms is seen that one would rather read in the marble than in books, and spend the whole day wondering at every single one of them than in meditating on the law of God. Good God! If one is not ashamed of the absurdity, why is one not at least troubled at the expense?” *Sancti Bernardi Claravelensis Apologia ad Guillelmum Sancti Theodoric Abbatem* 12.29, *Patrologia Latina* 183 col. 529. Translation from Conrad Rudolph, *The “Things of Great Importance”: Bernard of Clairvaux’s Apologia and the Medieval Attitude Toward Art* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press: 1990), 282–3.

“L’amoroso canto”: Liturgy and Vernacular Lyric in Dante’s *Purgatorio*

RONALD L. MARTINEZ

The ascent of Dante’s pilgrim in *Purgatorio* is marked by dawn, noon, dusk, and night. One consequence of this temporal scan-sion is that Dante reckons time on the mountain according to the canonical hours of the day, when liturgical offices are sung.¹ The synchronization of the church office and the routines of Purgatory in part reflect how the suffrages and prayers of the living faithful on earth, the church militant, benefit the dead in Purgatory (the “church suffering”).² Liturgical adaptation accordingly permeates the *cantica*: Dante adapts or invokes a range of liturgical elements (psalms, hymns, canticles, antiphons, the canon of the Mass) and presents a wide variety of forms of singing, analogous to the variety in the official liturgy;³ nor are gesture and action overlooked.⁴ The incorporation of liturgical elements and action is especially intense in the valley of the neglectful sovereigns (*Purg.* 6–8).⁵ A glance at that episode suggests the range and boldness of Dante’s adaptation of liturgy to his narrative, especially the degree to which liturgical language informs Dante’s invention: in terms of the metaphor Dante uses to speak of the relative mutual intelligibility of languages in the *Convivio* 1.6.10, liturgical Latin in the *Purgatorio* at certain junctures “converses” with the poet’s vernacular poetic idiom.

Beginning Canto 8 of *Purgatorio*, as the first day on the mountain wanes, Dante evokes the nostalgia of a pilgrim hearing the compline bell: “Era già l’ora che volge il disio . . . se ode squilla di lontano” (8.1, 5).⁶ The implied comparison cues the poet’s inclusion of elements from the office of compline, the last of the diurnal liturgical hours, in his account of the valley of negligent princes.⁷ That the hymn *Te lucis ante terminum* is

sung complete is explicit (“ . . . seguitando / per tutto l’inno intero” [8.13]), while passages such as 7.82–83 (“*Salve, Regina* . . . seder cantando”) and 7.125 (“Pier, che con lui canta”) suggest that the reader is to imagine the *Salve regina* sung continuously and reiterated in its entirety. These circumstances justify close scrutiny of the full office, for in addition to the brief Latin cues, further words and phrases from the two cited texts, as well as language drawn from other, unacknowledged elements in the office of compline, can be discerned grafted into Dante’s vernacular text, informing the landscape, language, gestures, and dramatic action—in short, Dante’s entire conception—in the valley.

The penitential *Salve regina*, which Dante has his princes sing as the Marian antiphon rather than the festive *Regina caeli*, with alleluias, liturgically prescribed for the Easter season of the journey, includes reference to the “vale of tears” where the sons of Eve suffer (“Ad te clamamus exsules, filii Hevae . . . gementes et flentes in hac lacrimarum valle”). But this vale is no other than the valley where the princes regret their neglect of duty (“l monte era scemo, / a guisa che i *vallon* li sceman quici” [7.65–66]; “seder cantando anime vidi, / che per la *valle* non parean di fuori” [7.83–84]; “a guardia de la *valle*” [8.38]) even as their petitions can be heard voiced in the words Nino Visconti recommends his wife cry out (“dì a Giovanna mia che per me *chiami*” [8.71]). Indeed, looking farther afield, the plea in the antiphon that Mary turn her gaze to her petitioners (“*miseriordes oculos ad nos converte* . . .”) answers the reproachful appeal to Christ in the previous canto (“son li giusti *occhi tuoi rivolti* altrove?” [6.120]). The text of the antiphon remains implicit through the whole episode.

Sung as night falls, *Te lucis* prays for protection from a demonic enemy that would instill erotic dreams in those who sleep: “procul recedant somnia . . . *hostemque* nostrum comprime.” The petition is rapidly fulfilled, and with analogous language, when the prepositioned custodian angels dive to repel the serpent (“nostro avversaro”) who routinely invades the valley: “. . . fuggì ’l serpente, e li angeli dier volta” (8.107). The appearance of the angels in response to the petitions of the *Salve regina* themselves also fulfills the guarantees of compline Psalm 90:15 (“*Clamabit ad me, et ego exaudiam eum* . . .”) and illustrates the rapid response of heaven to prayer, a theme introduced at the beginning of the episode, when Virgil’s clarification affirms Christian prayer: indeed, Virgil’s words (“la speranza

di costor non falla" [6.35]) are themselves fulfilled by the angelic intervention. Both the dramatic events that follow the singing of the hymn, and the speed of the angelic response to its petitions, probably constitute the hidden meaning implied by the poet's suggestion that the reader gaze through the subtle veil ("aguzza qui, lettore, ben gli occhi al vero / che 'l velo è ora ben tanto sottile" [8.19–20]). As this invitation directly follows the singing of the complete hymn ("tutto l'inno intero" [8.17]), the reader also is implicitly encouraged to consider the liturgical texts woven through the vernacular fabric.⁸

Indeed, Dante draws for the action of the serpent's repulsion on elements of the office neither mentioned nor cited: thus the custodian angels, who arrange themselves on a lofty perch so as to protect the souls in the valley ("l'un poco sopra noi a star si venne . . . sì che la gente in mezzo si contenne" [8.31, 34]) echo the terms of compline Psalm 90.4 ("Scapulis suis obumbrabit tibi, et sub pennis eius sperabis"), with *pennis* also present in the angelic "verdi penne" at 8.29. The danger and repulsion of the demonic enemy, the *avversario*, can be deduced from the epistle reading that begins compline—"sobrii estote, et vigilate, quia *adversarius* vester diabolus tanquam leo rugiens circuit quaerens quem devoret" (1 Peter 5:8)—but is also implied in words of the psalm following those quoted above: "Non timebis a timore nocturno . . . quoniam angelis suis mandavit de te, ut custodiant te in omnibus viis tuis . . . super aspidem et basiliscum ambulabis" (Ps. 90:5, 11).⁹

Even the gesture of supplication, which Dante underscores when the soul raises its arms to begin the compline hymn (" . . . levò ambo le palme") is derived from Psalm 133:1–2: "Laudes nocturnae in templo: . . . qui statis in domo Domini, in atriis domus Dei nostris. *In noctibus extollite manus vestras* in sancta. . . ." These verses, and other psalm verses like them, are found in medieval manuals that illustrate the physical attitudes of prayer.¹⁰ Thus although Dante does not reproduce a compline office, the drama and imagery of the request for divine protection that animates the office informs the landscape, gestures, and action—and of course the language—of these cantos in detail. When we recall that Dante invokes liturgy in terms of the simile of a pilgrim pierced by love when he hears the compline bell ("che lo nuovo peregrin d'amore / punge . . ."), the full import of the liturgical context is suggested, for a pilgrimage driven by love is one description of the whole journey of the poem.¹¹

The incorporation of liturgical text into the vernacular of *Purgatorio* is matched in Canto 7.91–136 by Dante’s well-known assimilation into his account of the negligent princes of the hierarchical scheme that orders the complaint for Blacatz, a poem in *lingua d’oc* attributed to Sordello, whom Dante makes into a guiding figure in the valley.¹² In light of Dante’s incorporation of both a liturgical office and a Provençal *planh-sirventes* into the text of *Purgatorio* 6–8, I propose that the coordination of liturgical and vernacular lyrical inspiration is an important organizational principle of *Purgatorio*. Three cases where a lyric vernacular text is juxtaposed with a liturgical one will be discussed. The first is the beginning of the *cantica*, where Psalm 113 (“In exitu Israel”) and Dante’s canzone “Amor che ne la mente mi ragiona” are cited and apparently contrasted in the same canto. The second is the chanting by the penitent gluttons in Canto 23 of Psalm 50.17, placed in a verbally tandem relationship to Bonagiunta’s elicitation, among the dieting gluttons in Canto 24, of the pilgrim’s notorious poetic credo. The third occurs at the summit of the mountain (Cantos 27–33), where the resemblance of Cavalcanti’s pastorella to Matelda as she sings the verses of a psalm represents the most intense collaboration of psalmody and vernacular lyric in Dante’s oeuvre. The three passages under scrutiny are variously interrelated: “Amor che nella mente” clearly imitates “Donne ch’avete,” the poem recalled in Canto 24, while Psalm 31, intoned by Matelda in Eden (*Purg.* 29.3), includes language relevant to the discipline of the lyric vernacular in all of *Purgatory*.

That the psalm and canzone citations in the second canto of *Purgatorio* are to be compared is self-evident.¹³ But what precisely results from this exercise? Guglielmo Gorni, speaking of a shift from a human to a divine register, to the “nuova legge” of Purgatory, joins many Dantists in viewing Cato’s disruption of the singing of “Amor che ne la mente” as a major Dantean palinode, though precisely of what—the performance, the canzone itself, the entire *Convivio*, Philosophy, or even Boethius himself—remains at issue.¹⁴ The contexts of the two incipits can be usefully contrasted: *In exitu Israel* is sung collectively, in unison, in its entirety, in Latin, and it punctuates the rapid approach of the angelic *galeotto* who steers the ship carrying souls to the island of Purgatory. The “amoroso canto” of the Italian canzone, on the other hand, is solicited by the pilgrim to console fatigue and recall a past sedation of desire (“solea quetar tutte mie voglie” [*Purg.* 2.108]); it is performed by one individual for another, though the seductive effect of its music and lyrics draws a crowd

and halts upward progress generally. For this reason the performance is interrupted by Cato almost as soon as it has been begun, so that the text is plausibly only partially rendered. Such contrasts seem to cast the canzone in a dubious light and justify the use of sharp dichotomies by critics: sacred against profane, collective versus individual, dynamic versus static, prospective versus retrospective or even regressive (the pilgrim's "anima . . . *affanata* tanto," recalls Paolo and Francesca as *anime affannate*).¹⁵ Clouding such dichotomies is the narrator's statement that the sweetness of Casella's singing sounds still in his memory ("la dolcezza ancor dentro mi suona" [2.114]), which, despite attempts to explain it away, undercuts any definitive dismissal of the content of the canzone. Rather, the *dolcezza* of the song, as Cesare Vasoli points out, summarizes a stilnovist genealogy of sweetness, on the one hand,¹⁶ and places "Amor che ne la mente" at the starting point of a pattern of dulcet sound in the *cantica*, on the other: the "dolce suon" of Mantua drives Virgil and Sordello into an embrace (6.80); Matelda's singing will be a "dolce suono" (28.59) to the pilgrim's ears and harmonize with the music-making "aura dolce" (28.7) of Eden and with the "melodia dolce" (29.22) and "dolce suon" (29.36) of the procession there; in Eden too the "dolci tempre" (30.94) of angelic psalmody will console the pilgrim when challenged by Beatrice. Dante appears to be at some pains to establish a melodious continuity permeating *Purgatorio*, beginning with the canzone at the base and culminating at the summit.¹⁷

Also against taking mention of "Amor che ne la mente" as a palinode is its close imbrication within the fabric of Canto 2 itself. Not only the *capoverso*, but a series of allusions both of content and form to "Amor che ne la mente" inform the last lines of Canto 2, as Ignazio Baldelli has observed. The first lines of the lyric (1–2): "Amor che ne la mente mi ragiona / de la mia donna disiosamente" recur as *sì dolcemente* and *suona* in the canto (2.113–14).¹⁸ From the formal point of view, the first stanza B rhyme on *dolcemente* in the canzone recurs three times (lines 3, 6, 7) but is assonantly recurrent in the E/e rhyme (–*ende*, lines 11–12); in Canto 2, lines 115 and 117 rhyme on –*ente*, and 2.116, 118, 120 on –*enti*. Rhyming and assonant schemes from the first stanza of the canzone thus entail lines 112–20 of the canto.¹⁹

Not mentioned by Baldelli are more distant echoes. One other rhyme, using the same words (*face*, *pace*, *piace*) in different order, is shared: in the second stanza of the canzone lines 22, 26, and 27 rhyme on –*ace* (the C

rhyme) while 2.95, 97, and 99 use this rhyme of the angel's action gathering souls.²⁰ In the last stanza of the canzone, the rhyming word to line 81 (*orgogliosa*) is related to the distinctive rhyming word at 2.126 (*orgoglio*).²¹ These additional parallels increase the entailment of the canzone in the canto, so that lines 94–133 are all under its reach, so to speak.²²

“Amor che ne la mente” is one of Dante's most richly scriptural and liturgical canzoni. In addition to paraphrasing, at the end of stanzas 3 and 4, the words of Sapientia in Proverbs 8:23 (line 54, “fu tal da eterno ordinate,” transcribes “ab aeterno ordinata sum”),²³ it refers in line 37 to the baptism of Christ (“In lei discende la virtù divina”; cf. John 1.32, “quia vidi spiritum descendentem quasi columba de caelo”), completing the reference already made at line 27 (“suo esser tanto a Quei che lel dà piace”; cf. “hic est filius meus dilectus; mihi complacui”).²⁴ While well known,²⁵ these references are not solely scriptural; they also allude to the liturgy of Epiphany, which includes reference to Christ's baptism as a manifestation of his divinity, a manifestation transferred in the canzone to the lady.²⁶

To this tally it can be added that the first line of the canzone, with its familiar formula of Love speaking within the mind, along with related lyric incipits, including the first two lines of the first *Convivio* canzone (“Voi ch'intendendo il terzo ciel movete / udite il ragionar ch'e nel mio core”) as well as the ballata answered by the canzone (“Voi che savete ragionar d'amore”), all reflect Psalm 84.9 in their conception of an internal dictation by Love: “Audiam quid loquatur in me Deus.” The verse is conspicuous in commentaries on the Psalms, like that of Peter Lombard, who writes in his preface that it attests to the superior direct inspiration of Davidic psalmody over other forms of registering prophetic truths.²⁷

And there is another kind of prophecy, worthier than the others, which is to say when prophecy is spoken solely through the inspiration of the Spirit, with no external ministration of deeds, or sayings, or visions or dreams. In this manner David prophesied, that is to say solely touched by the Holy Spirit. Whence follows: I hear what the Lord speaks within me.²⁸

In short, Psalm 84.9 is the equivalent for the book of Psalms of that profession of poetic inspiration made by the pilgrim to Bonagiunta in *Purgatorio* 24, itself based on psalm texts, of which more below.

That the *stile della loda* whose emergence Dante announces in the *Vita nuova* renders into the vernacular aspects of the *canticum novum* of psalmody has of course long been a critical commonplace.²⁹ Even outside the

confines of the *stil nuovo*, such a late Duecento kinship of psalmody, liturgy, and the vernacular is no surprise; if the sonnets of the Trevisan tuscanizing poet Niccolò de' Rossi are any guide, musical settings of vernacular lyrics and liturgical song were routinely compared with one another in early Trecento literary and musical circles; thus of the musician Checholino, whom de' Rossi ranks with a Casella who might be Dante's, we hear that his settings were as sweet as the *hymnus angelicus*, the liturgical Sanctus and Hosanna of the Mass preface: "lo cuy sono par celeste e devino; cum sì dolce nota che poco alonga / da l'angelico osano, ymno devino."³⁰ As I discuss below, the liturgical and scriptural allusions framing "Amor che ne la mente," along with the extensive inclusion of elements from the canzone in Cantos 1–2, justify Dante's recuperation of the canzone at the summit of Purgatory.

The impact of liturgy on the juxtaposition of the psalm "In exitu Israel" and the canzone is to be found in more than a few citations and echoes of psalm verses, however. Liturgy requires not only psalms and hymns but also gesture and movement. In the opening scene of *Purgatorio*, Dante compares the approach of the ship and its angelic pilot from the east ("un lume per lo mar venir . . ." [*Purg.* 2.17]) to the sight of a low-lying star on the horizon (first Venus, seen in the east, then, in a simile, Mars, low in the west).³¹ The star sightings anticipate the rising sun whose crossing of the horizon—the first occasion in the poem when a sunrise coincides with a canto beginning—furnishes the opening verse of the second canto ("già era 'l sole a l'orizzonte giunto").³²

Led by the angelic *galeotto*, who cues the spirits to fling themselves from the ship and makes the sign of the cross, the approach is processional in the gradualness of its movement. Once the souls arrive on the shores of their promised land, they disembark singing "In exitu Israel" in its entirety. The implications of the psalm for the pattern of exodus in the pilgrim's journey and in relation to the ceremony of baptism typically performed in the Easter season have been often remarked.³³ The arrival of the souls in Purgatory is also a mirror image of the elaborate procession that had brought them, recently dead, to church for the offices and mass of the dead, while priests and other officiants sang "In exitu Israel de Aegypto" as decreed in breviaries and missals.³⁴ In this sense the souls echo their own funeral exequies and their participation in the anagogical sense of the poem, "*exitus anime sancte ab his corruptionis servitute ad eternae gloriae libertatem*," as the account in the *Letter to Can Grande* (21)

has it.³⁵ Thus a polyvalent liturgical text used at Easter to mark the initiatory rite of baptism, which brings souls into the bosom of mother church, and as the anagogical psalm accompanying the dead in their journey,³⁶ frames the main action and serves as a generative model for Dante's vernacular invention.³⁷ Moreover, at the beginning of Purgatory, more than the psalm text may be involved: its antiphon text in the funeral procession is "Chorus angelorum te *suscipiat*, et colloce te *in sinu* Abrahæ," a text that might inform Casella's report of the angel's embarkation of souls from the port of Ostia ("quivi si *ricoglie* / qual verso Acheronte non si cala").³⁸ Indeed, Dante's uses of *ricoglie*, and later *ricolto*, plausibly translate *suscipere* in the antiphon, a term that is prominent in liturgical petitions on behalf of the dead.³⁹

The reception of the dead in heaven as triumphant governs the imagery of the commendation prayers and justifies the use of the joyful psalm "In exitu Israel" in the rituals for the dead.⁴⁰ Virgil's commands to the pilgrim to show reverence emphasize that the angel is the first of the officers of heaven, and Casella's gathering up is the first of a series of receptions in *Purgatorio* before the final angelic invitation to enter Eden; the angel's approach also anticipates the reception the pilgrim hopes to enjoy on a future day ("s'io ancor lo veggia" [2.16]). Correlated in several instances with the brilliance of the angel itself, which echoes the sunlike approach at *Purgatorio* 2.1, the pilgrim hears nine angelic invitations on the mountain: *intrar* (*Purg.* 2.99), *intrate* (3.101), *intrate* (9.131), *venite* (12.91–92), *intrate* (15.35), *venite* (18.43), *intrate* (27.11), *venite benedicti patris miei* (27.58), and (33.135) "vien con lui." The invitations conflate the call to the good servant ("*intra* in gaudium domini" [Matt. 25:21]) with the one made to those who have done works of mercy for Christ in others ("*Venite benedicti patris mei*" [Matt. 25:34–35]).⁴¹

But this does not exhaust the liturgical import of the episode.⁴² To introduce an image I will return to later, the angelic procession that approaches *with* the sun (and *as* the sun) may be compared to Dante's account in the fifth Latin letter (V.1–2) of Henry's triumphant advent to Italy compared to the rising solar disk: "Nam dies nova splendescit ab ortu Auroram demonstrans . . . quoniam Titan exoriatur pacificus."⁴³ Indeed Dante's sunrise imagery typically reflects the traditional comparison between the Roman *adventus*, the advent of the ruler to his kingdom, to the advent of Christ, who, in language based on Isaiah 9.2 and Luke 1.78 (*Canticum Zachariae*), familiar because drawn on for the Great O

antiphons of Advent and recited daily during the daily office as the *Benedictus* of Lauds, rises like the sun and illuminates those who have dwelled and walked in darkness.⁴⁴ The solar imagery typical of Advent also informs the liturgy of Palm Sunday and Christ's descent to Hell, as well as the introit to the Mass.⁴⁵ Correspondingly we find Advent imagery in Dante's poem during the descent to Hell, in Purgatory where Palm Sunday is evoked ("Benedictus qui venis" [*Purg.* 30.19]), and elsewhere in the poem.⁴⁶

In terms relevant to the present discussion, Advent liturgical language also furnishes the terms for Dante's proclamation, concluding the first book of the *Convivio* (1.13.12) that his vernacular commentary will rise like a sun and illuminate minds heretofore darkened by ignorance, making them receptive to philosophical learning and to Dante's poetry: "darà luce a coloro che sono in tenebre e oscurità." As this proclamation is followed in the *Convivio* by the first canzone, "Voi ch'intendendo," and subsequently by the second, "Amor che ne la mente," the angelic approach in the second canto of *Purgatorio*, where dead poetry rises again like a sun ("la morta poesí *risurga* . . . Caliopé alquanto *surga*") seems to enact within the text of the second *cantica* a version of the vernacular sunrise announced in the *Convivio*.⁴⁷ In such a context—and we recall that what follows that sunrise is Dante's elucidation of allegory, including the anagogical sense of "In exitu Israel" (*Conv.* 2.1.6–7)—Casella's singing of "Amor tu vedi ben" likely has a role in that illumination. If displaced and premature on the shores of Purgatory, as we saw, the re-evocation of "Amor tu vedi ben" within the precincts of Eden *will* be appropriate: indeed, a reaffirmation of Dante's vernacular poetic heritage will be found in close proximity to the figurative sunrise of Beatrice's manifestation to the pilgrim. The procession into sight of the first angel of Purgatory thus prepares the later and grander processions of Eden, and the persisting relevance of the canzone is an indication that its role in the poem is more than an occasion for palinodic dismissal; though Cato may decry its performance early in the *cantica*, our poet is not finished with "Amor tu vedi ben" until he is finished with *Purgatorio*.

If "Amor che ne la mente" and "In exitu Israel" are related within a single canto primarily by contrasting features, a balanced gemination governs the utterance of a Latin liturgical formula by the gluttons in Canto 23 and, in the following canto, the first line of Dante's canzone "Donne ch'avete" as cited by Bonagiunta, followed by Dante's confession of his

poetic credo to the poet of Lucca (24.52–54). Uniquely in the poem for two such citations in contiguous cantos, the passages share the same rhyming words, anchored on the word *modo*. The gluttons intone “*Labia mea, domine, per modo / tal che diletto e doglia parturie*” (23.11–12), while the poet, acknowledging the citation of his canzone incipit, says of Love the dictator: “. . . quando / Amor mi spira, noto, e a quel *modo / ch’e’ ditta dentro vo significando*” (24.52–54), also rhyming with *nodo* and *odo*.⁴⁸ That this is no accidental parallelism is made clear by other verbal correspondences (the poet’s *noto*, for example, echoes “*giugnendo per cammin gente non nota*” in the previous canto [23.17], describing the response of the singing gluttons to the presence of the wayfarers). The two passages are also significantly linked in respect to how they frame the interrelated acts of speaking or singing, listening, reading, and writing. In Canto 23 the pilgrim hears the souls sing and weep; in Canto 24.58–59, Bonagiunta’s admiring rejoinder to the pilgrim, “. . . le vostre penne / di retro al dittator sen vanno strette,” expands on the scribal metaphor previously introduced by the pilgrim’s *noto* in the self-account of his *poiesis*.⁴⁹

The passages are also closely related in light of their references to liturgy and scripture. That the gluttons are proceeding like pilgrims (23.16–18) introduces a context of liturgical movement consistent with the gradual motion of the angelic pilot in Canto 2 and one that is even more to the fore at the summit of the mountain.⁵⁰ More specifically, the liturgical introductory formula *Labia mea, Domine, aperies* (Ps. 50.17) has long been associated with the canzone Bonagiunta praises in Canto 24, especially in virtue of its first line (“. . . cominciando, ‘Donne ch’avete intelletto d’amore’”).⁵¹ In the *Vita nuova*, the canzone’s first line spontaneously moves the protagonist’s tongue (“la mia lingua come per se stessa mossa”), as if in answer to the words of the psalmist, “*Labia mea aperies,*” and echoing the previous line of the psalm, “*et exsultabit lingua mea iustitiam tuam.*” That the canzone initiates the new style, the “stile della loda” in praise of Beatrice, also renders relevant the psalm words that follow: “*et os meum annuntiabit laudem tuam.*” And the relevance of the psalm text for the *cominciamento* of the canzone, and of Dante’s new style generally, is sharper if we recognize that what the gluttons sing is none other than the daily *cominciamento* of liturgical praise, since it is the formula that traditionally begins the office at matins every day (and plausibly other hourly offices as well):⁵² it opens the lips for each day’s work of praise of God.⁵³ If the liturgy is recognized as a source text, then the oral performance of

the pilgrim gluttons has a precedent in the formula recited to begin the daily "work" of praise, the office.

So much for the inspiration to an *oral* profession of praise (and penitence) behind these two *Purgatorio* passages; in regard to the inspiration of the poet's *writing*, the transition identified by the pilgrim's statement that he takes down the inner dictation of Love (*noto*), Mario Casella long ago pointed to a text now attributed to Ivo of Chartres to explain the poet's transcription into intelligible signs of the concepts dictated within his heart by the Spirit.⁵⁴ The words in Ivo's text are framed by the language of Psalm 44, which proves equally relevant to Dante's passage, indeed, seems to prepare Bonagiunta's capping of the pilgrim's deployment of the scribal metaphor for the manner of his response to the dictation of the Spirit.⁵⁵ Psalm 44 begins, "Eructavit cor meum verbum bonum; lingua mea calamus velociter scribentis." Dante knew the psalm well, for on several occasions he employs the vigorous, not to say gutsy, *eructare*—the word that for Erich Auerbach was a defining example of *sermo humilis*⁵⁶—while in the *Commedia* the psalm verse clearly informs Justinian's attempt in the heaven of Mercury to account for Julius Caesar's lightning-fast campaigns, "che nol seguiteria lingua né penna" (*Par.* 6.63), thus framing the exploits of the first emperor in terms of his providential mission.⁵⁷ The text is especially apt for the pilgrim's profession of his activity as scribal since it tracks how a word conceived within is then represented both with the tongue (*lingua mea*) and with a writing instrument (*calamus scribentis*).⁵⁸ The gloss by Innocent III on the psalm suggests its relevance to the pilgrim's profession among the gluttons: "As the scribe impresses on parchment the ink from his inkhorn, so through the tongue of the prophet the Holy Spirit fills the human heart with the knowledge of truth drawn from the hidden treasury of God."⁵⁹ But for Dante the metaphor moves in the opposite direction: words inspired within the prophet or poet come to his tongue and finally to his pen.⁶⁰

What are the implications of Dante's allusion to Psalm 44? Among liturgical uses, the opening verses of Psalm 44 are most closely associated with the Incarnation, especially through the use of Psalm 44.1–2 as an antiphon and gradual text in the Nativity liturgy.⁶¹ The pilgrim's profession has been seen as manifesting Dante's poetics of the Word made flesh;⁶² and the pilgrim's activity as poet has been seen as proportionately analogous to the action of the Creator, also sometimes associated with the first verses of Psalm 44.⁶³

The texts of Psalms 44 and 50, along with others, may help to explain Dante's decision to place a key discussion of his poetry among the gluttons and their fasting. Verbal utterance and fasting are colocated in the lips, mouth, and vocal apparatus, which is emphasized by the fact that Bonagiunta's words arise in the place in which he is chastised for gluttony (23.38–39: "ov'el sentia la piaga / de la giustizia che sì li pilucca").⁶⁴ The correlation of the penitential *Labia mea, Domine* (focused on external instruments of speech) and the praiseful *Eructavit cor meum* (emphasizing the heart, the inner source) with the moment of vernacular poetic renewal of "Donne ch'avete" suggests that a liturgical discipline was shaping Dante's vernacular poetics at their staged moment of origin in the *Vita nuova*; while in the case of the pilgrim's profession in Canto 24, as readers have observed, a restriction (the metaphorical *nodo*) had kept Bonagiunta from reaching the standard of the "dolce stil nuovo" that he hears.⁶⁵ The idea of discipline is sharpened when we consider that *Labia mea, Domine* was also familiar to Dante's readers as the text prescribed in Benedict's *Rule* for commencing readings in refectory, that is, as the introduction to both austere meals and edifying texts.⁶⁶ In this context, Peter Lombard's gloss on *Eructavit*, a term with inevitable gastrointestinal implication, becomes relevant as the outburst of the psalmist who has attended the wedding feast of God's espousal of humanity and voices his spiritual satiety ("celestibus epulis saginatus") in an epithalamium.⁶⁷

Gastronomic considerations might appear eccentric were it not for the fact that the bridle, one of the chief metaphors for the discipline that governs all of Purgatory is drawn from Psalm 31.9 ("In camo et freno maxillas eorum constringe"), and the incipit of this same psalm is adapted by Dante to celebrate the completion of purgation on the mountain: "Beati quorum tecta sunt peccata."⁶⁸ Indeed, the psalm text is implicit in numerous passages in the *cantica* where metaphors of whips, bits, and bridles are used.⁶⁹ But as the words of the psalm apply restraint to the cheeks and jaws—referring to directing the head of a mule or horse—in the case of the gluttons such restraints govern the mandibular action of eating (what enters the mouth) and speaking (what exits the mouth).⁷⁰ That Dante considered the control of his poetry more generally in terms of a discipline guided by the Psalms is suggested when Guinizelli, Dante's poetic father, refers to the Empyrean where the pilgrim is destined to arrive in an abbot-guided monastery ("... il chiostro / onde Cristo è l'abate del collegio" [*Purg.* 26.128–29]) and is ultimately attested to by

the restraint on the *Purgatorio* text itself, "lo fren dell'arte" (33.141), which imposes a conclusion when the predetermined number of pages are filled.⁷¹ Where the moral education on the terraces applies both the whip and the bridle (*ferza*, *freno*), Dante's vernacular submits to the correction of the Psalms, which both enjoin penitence and stimulate to praise.⁷² In this connection, we note how swiftly the penitent gluttons move, compared to birds in Canto 24 ("volan più in fretta e vanno in filo"); even those in Canto 23 move more quickly—"più tosto mota"—than the pilgrims to whom they are compared (19). The tongue or the pen can only move swiftly if unburdened by the excesses of gluttony. Framing of the *cominciamento* of "Donne ch'avete" in terms of the language and oral action of psalmody assures Dante a poetical manifesto that is lean and troped to ascend as well as one whose very enunciation embodies the psalm-inspired discipline of the mountain.⁷³

The pairing, one might say gemination, of the passages in *Purgatorio* using *modo* / *odo* / *nodo* is superseded, at the entrance to the earthly Paradise, by what is literally a conflation, a "breathing together," of the vernacular lyric and the liturgical psalm through a single figure and voice. The transition from Canto 28 to 29 sets out a polyhymnial dimension to the lady later revealed to be Matelda, whose voice subsumes possibly all poetic voices worthy of the name. Her corollary concluding Canto 28 regarding the resemblance of Eden to the classical golden age dreamt by classical poets on Parnassus, including adaptation of an Ovidian text ("qui primavera sempre" [143] echoing *Metamorphoses* 1.107: "ver erat aeternum"),⁷⁴ is cheek-by-jowl with her singing of a half-verse adapted from Psalm 31, whose later verses inform the disciplinary regime of the mountain, "Beati quorum tecta sunt peccata,"⁷⁵ even as her movements are described with words drawn from Cavalcanti's pastorella.⁷⁶ The words of the ballata rhyme with the psalm, establishing a *concentus* between the vernacular lyric and the sacred Latin text:

Cantando come donna innamorata
continuò col fin delle sue parole
beati quorum *tecta sunt peccata*.⁷⁷

Matelda's singing and gathering flowers reiterate simultaneously an oneiric, scriptural Lia, (27.100–103), the mythical Proserpina (28.49–51), and Cavalcanti's amorous pastorella: in the same way the traditions of classical

epic, vernacular lyric, and the Psalms implicitly converge. If Eden both preceded and fulfills a pagan Golden Age, the pastorella wandering *sola sola* offers a lyric and vernacular version of the myth of Proserpina, who was alone in a *locus amoenus* when seen, desired, and seized. But as Matelda presents a Proserpina who will not again be the spoil of Hades, she is also a pastorella spared the violence normative to the genre.

Cavalcantian ballate, along with Dante's own, as if the poetic voices of the author and his "primo amico" were gathered into the broadcast music of Eden.⁷⁸ For Eden is a place of song: Dante's Cavalcantian canto *cominciamento* begins "cantando," from a verb that, of seventy uses in the poem, counts nearly forty instances in *Purgatorio*, seventeen of which fall in Cantos 27–33, including singing in Latin ("Benedictus qui venis") and Hebrew ("Osanna"). The span of a canto (28.1–29.2) counts five uses. There are many singers in Eden in addition to Matelda, including birds, angels, personified virtues, and books of the Bible (significantly, it is the *Canticum canticorum* that sings welcome to Beatrice, "veni sponsa de Libano"). Since the trees are struck into sound by the wind of the turning spheres, all the songs harmonize with the cosmic melody that envelops Eden: the birdsong that, as Ambrose glossed in his *Hexameron*, is nature's psalmody;⁷⁹ the music that in Cavalcanti's ballata ("quando l'augel pia") moves the pastorella to song and to desire; and the Aeolian breeze ("quand' Ëolo scilocco fuor discioglie" [28.21]) that invokes epic song by recalling the Aeolus episode that opens the *Aeneid*.⁸⁰

That the pastorella sings and gathers flowers, with a background of birdsong, is of course intrinsic to the genre. On occasion she is given the refrain or even the *ripresa* in strophic *pastourelles*, but this is not the treatment of the *ripresa* in Cavalcanti's case, although the pastorella's words are at the center of his poem (lines 13–14): ". . . sacci, quando l'augel pia / allor disia—'l meo cor drudo avere." Dante transforms the initial imperative *sacci* for Lia's self-allegoresis: "'sappia qualunque il mio nome dimanda / ch'io mi son Lia, e vo movendo intorno / le belle mani a farmi una ghirlanda'" (27.100–102), actions that bind her closely to that of the generic pastorella as well.⁸¹

That Matelda sings, gathers flowers, and feels loving pleasure is consonant too with the explicit self-definition she offers of herself with a single word from Psalm 91 (recited during Saturday matins), *delectasti*, which continues "in factura tua" ("thou hast delighted me in thy works"). The isolation of the word, and Matelda's claim that it explains what the pilgrim

is witnessing, underlines its etymological force. In its relation to *colligere* and *dilectus*, and just plain *lectus* ("gathered," or "read") the word might allude to all the gestures of gathering and cherishing within Eden ("luogo eletto" / a l'umana natura" [28.77–78]) and indeed in all of *Purgatory*. The first sight of the sky over *Purgatory*, we recall, "a li occhi miei ricominciò diletto" (1.16), and the first group of souls Virgil addresses are "già spirti eletti" (3.73). Other instances are Lia "cogliendo fiori" to make her garland (27.99), Matelda "scegliendo fior da fiore" (28.41), the birdsong gathered by the breeze (28.19: "si raccolse di ramo in ramo"), and, looking back to the beginning of the ascent, the very gathering of souls into *Purgatory*, as Casella is *ricolto* by the angel pilot. Indeed, the related terms have mythic resonance, as Proserpina was gathering flowers ("candida lilia carpit") when she was plucked by Pluto,⁸² and it is precisely this seizure by death that the gathering into Eden undoes.⁸³ As in the case of Lia, where singing and gathering are closely related ("cogliendo fiori; e cantando dicea" [27.99]), the action of gathering is literally anthological: just as Eden is, in Matelda's report, the treasury of all seed stocks, the psalmist's *delectasti* registers Dante's Eden as a poetic anthology, a garland of poetic flowers, as Quaglio observed.⁸⁴

As readers have long seen, the vernacular anthology is one of ballate by Dante and Cavalcanti. The citations themselves articulate the pattern of adumbration and fulfillment that runs from Lia to Matelda to Beatrice. The description of Lia as "giovane e bella," (27.97) recalls the first lines of two of Dante's ballate,⁸⁵ "I mi son pargoletta bella e nova" and "Perché ti vedi giovinetta e bella," while the pilgrim's apostrophe of Matelda, "deh, bella donna che a' raggi d'amore / ti scaldi" (28.43–44) echoes, as it shifts from shade to rays of light, "Deh, Violetta, che in ombra d' amore / subito apparisti." Drawn from Guido's "Fresca rosa novella" is the rhyme on *rivera* and *primavera* that frames Matelda as Proserpina as well as the *verdi arbuscelli* like those Virgil points out to the pilgrim as they enter Eden.⁸⁶ "Fresca rosa novella," a ballata attributed to Dante in the Palatino anthology, is recorded as dedicated to Dante by Cavalcanti in the Chigiano manuscript (L VIII 305): the linking of the two authors might testify to a prelapsarian moment remembered or imagined when their friendship was intact and their inspiration shared.⁸⁷ In this hypothetical scenario, Guido's early appreciation of Dante's poems ("le tue rime avea raccolto") would here be answered with a gathering of Guido's ballate,⁸⁸ an anthology honoring the form in which he was preeminent, as Dante's emulation of him

attests, but which Dante's Mateldan pastorella also in some sense proposes to transcend.

Indeed, Gianfranco Contini observed that the syntactic inversions of verses like those Dante uses of Lia ("giovane e bella in sogno mi pareo / donna vedere" [27.97–98]) associates them to a Latinate syntax antedating *stilnovo* style, making them reminiscent of Guittone or Panuccio del Bagno.⁸⁹ From this perspective, Dante's anthology is deliberately archaic and juvenile, a *primo vere*, as d'Annunzio would say, a return to vernacular origins just as he reaches the ancient forest that is "eletto / a l'umana natura per suo nido" (28.77–78).⁹⁰

Dante's most extensive borrowings are of course from Guido's pastorella.⁹¹ They touch on the *ripresa* and on every strophe of the ballata and they appear in every canto near and within Eden.⁹² As the genre prescribes, Cavalcanti's shepherdess moves "sola sola per lo bosco"; she appears for Dante's pilgrim as "una donna soletta che si gia" (28.40) and later remains "la donna ch'io avea trovata sola" (31.92).⁹³ In that same episode, the pilgrim's immersion ("abbracciommi la testa e mi sommerse" [31.101]) and his reception by the virtues ("... ciascuna del braccio mi coperse" [31.105]) evokes the *abbracciare* generically asked of the pastorella,⁹⁴ while his consignment to the chorus of virtues, the nymphs—"le quattro belle" (31.104)—who in heaven are stars—"siamo stelle" (31.106)—absorbs Guido's praise of his shepherdess in the *ripresa* ("come la stella / bella, al mio parere"), a parallel that hearkens back to Virgil's first view of Beatrice, "'... donna mi chiamò beata e bella / ... / Lucevan li occhi suoi più che la stella'" (*Inf.* 2.53, 55).⁹⁵

The insistence on ballate in Eden is both formal and thematic. Of the three major vernacular poetic forms, only the ballata is necessarily wedded to both musical form and to dance, as Dante spelled out in his presentation of the one ballata of the *Vita nuova* (12.8).⁹⁶ Song and dance are likewise essential to Matelda, who must sing, turn on her feet, and move her hands, since she represents the active life and, insofar as she personifies Sapientia, her cooperation in the Creation.⁹⁷ Thus Matelda sings as she walks ("... si gia / cantando" [28.40–41]) and turns as if dancing ("come si volge ... donna che balli" [28.52–53]), so that she is etymologically wedded to the ballata form, as she is to the pastorella genre.⁹⁸ Her turns are themselves allusive, for as a form wedded to recursive music, the ballata returns insistently upon itself in the iterations of the *ripresa* and metrically similar *volte*. Ballate are also social and dialogic, involving both a

soloist (singing the *mutazioni* and *volte*) and chorus (singing the *ripresa*), features that contextualize Matelda's cooperation with Beatrice and the virtues in the rituals of Eden.⁹⁹ Finally, and perhaps most important: the Trecento theorist Antonio del Tempo claims that ballate typically arise from venereal motives: their *ratio* is love ("fiunt gratia amoris venerei"). This may help explain why Dante sees his dancing Matelda as Venus besotted of Adonis, as a woman in love: she personifies a ballata.¹⁰⁰

That the ballata genre implies an amorous subject is evident in light of the surviving ballate in the anthologies that were contemporary with Dante's early poetic career. The *Memoriali bolognesi* preserve a version of Cavalcanti's pastorella along with a contemporary ballata, verbally linked to it, "d'un amorosa voglia," where the phrase "amorosa voglia" anticipates the pastorella's desire in the last strophe of the ballata ("Per man mi prese d'amorosa voglia").¹⁰¹

Both the ballata and the pastorella were traditionally fungible as religious texts. The five poems (to Gesù, Maria, Domenico, and Francesco) at the center of the Fra Guittone section of the Laurentian anthology are sacred ballate, or laude; the last of them, "Vegna vegna alla danza," praises and dances out of humility.¹⁰² The erotic pastorella and the sacred *lauda* can thus coexist through the form of the ballata; to put it another way, within the formal confines of the ballata sacred and profane love coexist.¹⁰³ There are formal reasons for this fungibility. Singing the *ripresa* after each stanza is not unlike the antiphonal or responsorial verse between the several verses of a psalm,¹⁰⁴ and this might explain why, like the typical pastorella, who sings refrains and even *riprese* in some instances of the genre, Matelda moves while singing psalm verses: in her person and action lyric genres and liturgical meanings become embodied in a single dance and a single voice.

Of all the gestures and language Dante appropriates from Cavalcanti's ballata, the boldest is the pastorella's surprising seizure of her *drudo* by the hand to lead him under the bushes: "menommi sott'una freschetta foglia." The implication is unmistakably of a sexual consummation, as the couplings that conclude examples of the genre are often managed under trees or bushes.¹⁰⁵ The initiative shown by Cavalcanti's shepherdess follows on, but also prevents, the speaker's privately voiced intention of seizing his pleasure from the shepherdess (" . . . Or è stagione / di questa pastorella gio' pigliare" [17–18])—a reversal of roles that, although not unprecedented within the genre, prepares the poem's striking conclusion and

makes Guido's shepherdess a fitting precedent for the powerful Matelda. In Dante's Eden, the pastorella's boldness programs the virtuous nymphs in Eden to bring the pilgrim before Beatrice's eyes ("merrenti a li occhi suoi" [31.109]) and thus before the enigmatic Gryphon Beatrice reflects ("al petto del grifon seco *menarmi*" [31.113]);¹⁰⁶ that same boldness prepares the final action of the *cantica*, when Matelda leads the pilgrim, at Beatrice's command, to drink from Eunoè ("menalo ad esso" [33.128]).¹⁰⁷ But the second part of the verse, "sott' una freschetta foglia," proves even more consequential for Dante's Eden, which is everywhere, except perhaps in one place, canopied with foliage screening out the sun.¹⁰⁸ Even as it shares the first word of the "shared" ballata "*Fresca rosa novella*," Cavalcanti's phrase sketches in much of the landscape of the earthly paradise: it informs the pilgrim's first sight of Lethe ". . . bruna bruna / sotto l'ombra perpetüa" (28.31–32)¹⁰⁹ and his sight of the procession approaching "sotto i verde rami" (29.35); it parses his sights of Beatrice, who first appears "sotto verde manto" (30.31); then ". . . sotto la fronda / nova . . ." (32.86–87) of the refoliated tree of knowledge. The final goal, the river Eunoè, appears "sotto foglie verdi e rami nigri" (33.110). On the moral plane, the same phrase defines the refusal of restriction that lost Eve her Eden in the first place ("non sofferse di star sotto alcun velo," 29.27).

If Cavalcanti's fertile line can summon up for Dante's Eden the classical shaded landscape of Latin amorous elegy, "tectus nemoralibus" in Ovid's phrase (*Amores* 3.1.5), the psalm verse—"beati quorum *tecta sunt peccata*," that is, "blessed are those whose sins are," literally, "covered over"—also proves consequential. In Peter Lombard's commentary on the psalm, this roofing over is compared to baptism in its historical sense of immersion in the Red Sea: "sins are covered over [*teguntur*] in baptism, as the Egyptians following Israel were covered over [*tecti sunt*] by the Red Sea."¹¹⁰ The bold gloss invoking Psalm 113, "In exitu Israel," seems justified in the presence of the pilgrim's immersion in a Lethe that had at first refused to open to his desire ("allor non s'aperse," 28.75). We see why Dante needed the second hemistich of the psalm verse rather than the first: he required the word *tecta*: covered, shielded, veiled. The term transforms the profane sense of the umbrageous cover as a screen for dalliance into the shade of Eden as the place where sin is erased and forgotten. Just as *delectasti* from Psalm 90 organizes the literary anthologies of Eden, the assonant and consonant *tecta* from Psalm 30 provides the shelter for the rituals of a renewed, innocent eros.¹¹¹

Matelda recalls to the pilgrim Proserpina gathering rosebuds in the Enna vale before she lost the spring ("nel tempo che perdette / la madre lei, ed ella primavera" [28.50–51]), and the word for spring, rare in the *Commedia*—though used in Eden by Matelda of the perpetual spring of the golden age ("qui primavera *sempre*" [28.143])—draws, as we saw, on Guido's "Fresca rosa novella, / piacente primavera." These instances bring to the surface the buried allusion to Proserpina in the exordium to *Purgatorio*, where the poet evokes, as the model for his narrative, the Muses' song of Proserpina's rape, detention in Hell, and periodic return.¹¹² The story of Proserpina is necessarily one of the ruling myths of the *Purgatorio*, signaling that the aim of the *cantica* will be the recovery not only of Beatrice but of the lost Eden, the lost spring. In theological terms, it is the recovery of prelapsarian justice and of innocent desire and pleasure, that "onesto riso e dolce gioco"—of which Cavalcanti's "gioia e dolzore" is the hendyadic precedent—in the place of Adam's legacy, which left mankind "in pianto e in affanno" (28.95–96). These differing outcomes, which embrace all human experience, might appear to register distinct versions of the pastorella, where "play" or "game" (*ludere, jeu, jeu, gioco*) is the standard euphemism for sexual play, willing or forced.¹¹³

Under this same rubric of delayed return Dante also recuperates in Eden the initially distracting, delaying canzone "Amor che ne la mente." The sententious conclusions to two stanzas of "Amor che ne la mente," where the lady is identified as Sapientia, return conspicuously in Eden. Philosophy, we hear in the penultimate stanza (54), "fu tal da eterno *ordinata*" (freely rendering Proverbs 8.23, "ab aeterno ordinata sum") and was intended by God "costei pensò chi mosse l'universo" (72). Similar identifications are posited of the virtues in Eden as they gather around Beatrice: "pria che Beatrice discendesse al mondo / fummo *ordinate* a lei per sue *ancelle*" (31.107–8), thus alluding as well to the first *Convivio* canzone "Voi ch'intendendo," where the speaker's soul finally speaks to Love in the terms of Mary's response to Gabriel (Luke 1:38), "Ecco l'*ancella* tua; fa che ti piace." This manifestation of Beatrice immediately precedes her revelation to the pilgrim, through the "first" beauty of her eyes, the enigmatic Christ that is the Gryphon.

These parallels are well known, but readers have also spotted that in narrating how the pilgrim is driven through the fire by Beatrice's name ("... udendo il nome / che ne la mente *sempre* mi rampolla" [27.41–42]), the poet recalls the sense and rhythm of "Amor che ne la mente mi ragiona"

and confirms the equivalence established at *Vita nuova* 24.5 between the name of Beatrice with that of Love.¹¹⁴ There is also an anticipation of Matelda's assertion of the persisting spring in Eden ("qui primavera *sempre*"), so that Beatrice, Primavera, and Sapientia come to a predetermined convergence in the pilgrim's burgeoning mind, whether as "donna gentile" or as Philosophy—"amoroso uso della Sapienza"—or as Wisdom herself. The pilgrim's bewilderment before the overwhelming Lady Philosophy in the *Convivio* (line 4: ". . . lo 'ntelletto sovr'esse disvia") and before the distraction evoked by Casella's performance are both renewed at Matelda's appearance ("là m'apparve, sì com' elli appare / subitamente cosa che *disvia* / per maraviglia . . ." [28.37–39]), but this bewilderment is the prologue to the coming of Beatrice.

Recovery of the Cato-censored canzone performance is also achieved through the manipulation of Guido's ballata—it was a ballata, we recall, that the canzone answered in the first place. The pastorella's expression of her desire ("per man mi prese, *d'amorosa voglia*"), formulaic for erotic ballate in the early vernacular anthologies, is fitted to the pilgrim's invitation to Matelda: "vegnati *in voglia* di trarreti avanti" (28.46). But it also echoes, over vast textual distance and with noun and modifier divided over two lines, the pilgrim's request to Casella for that "*amoroso canto* / che mi solea quietar *tutte mie voglie*" (2.107–8).¹¹⁵ The "*amorosa voglia*" that, innocence once regained, becomes licit in Eden, anagrammatically exorcises the she-wolf's antithetical "*bramosa voglia*" (*Inf.* 1.98) or "*la voglia . . . dell'oro ghiotta*" of Midas (*Purg.* 20.105), both ultimately versions of the Virgilian "*auri sacra fames*" that looms so large in *Purgatorio*.

In this context, it can be suggested that Casella's singing of "Amor che ne la mente" remotely prepares the disclosure, in Eden, of Beatrice's two beauties: her eyes, associated now with the demonstrations of philosophy (*Convivio* 3.15.2) and her second, hidden, beauty, her mouth, glossed by Dante as the persuasions of Wisdom when explaining the canzone in the *Convivio* (3.15.2–3).¹¹⁶

Per grazie fa noi grazia che disvele
a lui la bocca tua, sì che discerna
la seconda bellezza che tu cele.
(*Purg.* 31.136–38)

Guido's ballata has an impact on the phrasing of both beauties: when discussing Wisdom's eyes at *Convivio* 2.15.4, Dante refers to the demonstrations that appear in her eyes "quando essa con li suoi drudi ragiona,"

adopting the term—rare in Dante—for the lover Guido’s pastorella desires. The disclosure in Eden of Beatrice’s second beauty is, in turn, the ultimate challenge to a poet reared on shady Parnassus (“chi palido si fece sotto l’ombra / sì di Parnaso” [31.140–41]) who must now relate Beatrice’s emergence from all cover save the heavens: “là dove armonizzando il ciel t’adombra / quando ne l’aere aperto ti solvesti” (31.144–45). In construing Beatrice’s revelation, it is important to recall that the Latin liturgical translations of Greek *epiphania* are *manifestatio* and *apparitio*,¹¹⁷ for these terms furnish Dante’s vocabulary in the passage, making it the most liturgically freighted instance of going “sotto la freschetta foglia”—doubly so through allusion to the scriptural *obumbratio* that descends on Mary at the Annunciation (Luke 1.35). That Beatrice discloses (*disvela*) her beauty under heaven makes the scene an Epiphany, recalling the Epiphany echoes in “Amor tu vedi ben,” along with related Beatrician epiphanies in the *Vita nuova* (“*apparve* prima la gloriosa donna de la mia mente”) to the recent appearances of Leah and Matelda (“là m’apparve” [28.37]).¹¹⁸ The transformation of Cavalcanti’s phrase into a double of the Annunciation scene perhaps signals the transcendence of the “primo amico” and the pilgrim’s proximate emergence from the earthly paradise of redeemed Nature.¹¹⁹ But the prominence of the ballata in guiding Dante’s fashioning of his Eden and its close association with the psalm argue a more substantial role for Cavalcanti than usually allowed; his ballata typifies Eden, the place where Dante celebrates the blessedness of this life, “beatitudinis huius vite.”¹²⁰

From this vantage, the processional appearance of the angel in *Purgatorio* 2, along with the rising springtime sun, announces a series of advents in *Purgatorio*; better, it announces that *Purgatorio* will be structured as the long-deferred advent of Beatrice, as Singleton observed. The angel, “beato per iscripto,” is a precursor (like Leah, like Matelda, like John the Baptist, like Cavalcanti). He heralds the advent rising sun of the vernacular and its triumph (as announced in *Convivio*, of both “Voi ch’intendendo” and “Amor che ne la mente”), and he anticipates the long-deferred advent of Beatrice in *Purgatorio*, who will appear as the cloud-veiled but rising sun, “. . . la faccia del sol nascere ombrata” (30.25), which is itself an adaptation of the *Convivio* imagery of Philosophy as dispelling clouds of doubt.¹²¹ Clearly too the advent of Giovanna and Bice in the twenty-fourth chapter of the *Vita nuova*, where Cavalcanti’s Giovanna is named Primavera, or “prima verrà,” according to a processional order based on

John the Baptist's role as the precursor to Christ, anticipates the succession of Leah and Rachel in the pilgrim's third dream and thus also foreshadows the sequence of Matelda as the Proserpina-like Primavera followed by Beatrice as herself. Bice's advent in *Vita nuova* 24 is technically an Epiphany, for the prose explains that Giovanna "prima verrà lo die che Beatrice si mosterrà a lo suo fedele," and as such it too distantly prepares Beatrice's unveiling at the end of Canto 31. *Vita nuova* 24 itself summarizes the advent-epiphany pattern that governs appearances of Beatrice in the *libello*; and that the procession of paired figures in *Purgatorio* culminates in Beatrice's reappearance to the pilgrim after ten years in a kind of Palm Sunday procession ("Benedictus qui venis" [30.19]) is an ultimate confirmation of the pattern: Palm Sunday was liturgically understood as summarizing the several advents and triumphs of Christ, from the Incarnation, the espousal of human nature, to the final advent in judgment, anticipated at *Purgatorio* 30.15 in the chorus of angels who sing like the resurrected at the last trump.¹²² If we grant that the text of *Purgatorio* is a weave of lyric song, poetic narrative, and liturgical chant, then we can imagine Casella's "amoroso canto / che mi solea quietar tutte mie voglie" to be continuous with the *amorosa voglia* of the pastorella who is also Matelda, just as the newly liberated souls singing the joyful psalm "In exitu Israel" at the foot of the mountain are finally unanimous with the angels *alleluiando* at its summit.

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NOTES

1. Dante discusses the canonical hours at *Convivio* 3.6.2–3 and 4.23.14, in Dante Alighieri, *Opere minori* 1/2, ed. Cesare Vasoli and Domenico De Robertis, *La letteratura italiana: Storia e testi* 5 (Milan: Ricciardi, 1988). For the organization of life in medieval communities according to the canonical hours, see Jacques Le Goff, "Merchant's Time and Church's Time in the Late Middle Ages," in *Time, Work, and Culture in the Middle Ages*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), 29–42.

2. In Dante's case, though not in orthodox purgatorial theology, the living also benefit from the petitions of the dead, as in *Purgatorio* 11.22–24, so that the relationship between the living and the dead is reciprocal. On the "church suffering," see especially Peter Armour, *The Door of Purgatory: A Study of Multiple Symbolism in Dante's Purgatorio* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983).

3. *Salve regina* seems to be sung in unison ("che s'accorda, / cantando, con colui" [7.112–13]; "che con lui canta" [7.125]), like "In exitu Israel" ("cantavan tutti insieme ad una voce" [*Purg.* 2.47]) as well as the *Agnus Dei*, from the canon ("una parola in tutte era e un modo, / sì che pareva

tra esse ogni concordia" [16.20–21]). In the case of the *Miserere* (Psalm 50) at Canto 5.24, that the psalm is sung "a verso a verso" may indicate the souls sing antiphonally, divided into two choirs. In the case of *Tu lucis*, a cantor intones the beginning of the opening verse ("le uscìo di bocca e con sì dolci note" [8.14]) followed by a chorus ("seguitar lei per tutto l'inno intero" [8.17]). In Canto 23.10–11 ("Ed ecco piangere e cantar s'udie / *Labia mea Domine* . . .") does not specify, although it corresponds to the opening *preces* of the office (*Domine, labia mea aperies*), sung collectively; but at 26.46–48, stanzas of the hymn *Summae Deus clementiae* alternate with the examples of lust and chastity cried out by the heterosexual and homosexual groups, so that vernacular texts alternate with liturgical Latin stanzas in the manner of psalm verses and antiphon. Words from the Latin hymn (line 14, "nunc concinendo rumpimus") cue the souls' raising of their voices (25.130, 134, 26.48: "e al gridar che più lor si convene"). In canto 33.1–12, for the singing of Psalm 78, "Deus venerunt gentes," Dante has alternating verses sung by the choir of virtues, then a response or *versus* by Beatrice (33.1–3, 9–10: ". . . alternando / or tre or quattro dolce salmodia, / le donne incominciaro . . . rispuose, colorata come foco: / *'Modicum, et non videbitis me.'*") In the last two instances vernacular and Latin elements literally respond to each other.

4. See Mario Marti, "Dolcezza di memorie ed assoluto etico nel canto di Casella (*Purg.* II)," in *Studi su Dante* (Galatina: Congedo, 1984), 81–99, esp. 96, speaking of Purgatory in general: "A noi si permetta di insistere sul suo carattere ecclesiastico, liturgico, gregoriano."

5. For the matins office liturgy of the paschal *triduum* in *Purgatorio* 6, and the digression on slavish Italy, including references to Italy, Rome, and Florence as the widow of Lamentations, see my "Lament and Lamentation in *Purgatorio* and the Case of Dante's Statius," *Dante Studies* 113 (1997): 45–88. See also Maurizio Perugi, "Il Sordello di Dante e la tradizione mediolatina dell'invettiva," *Studi danteschi* 55 (1983): 23–135; and John Scott, *Dante's Political Purgatory* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996): 96–128.

6. Canto 7.43, "dichina il giorno," echoing "advesperascit, et inclinata est iam dies" from Luke 24.29, cues a series of references to the vespers office, which precedes compline; a study of these is in preparation.

7. Relevant studies include the following: Louis M. La Favia, "*Ché quivi per canti* . . ." (*Purg.*, XII. 113): *Dante's Programmatic Use of Psalms and Hymns in the 'Purgatorio'*," *Studies in Iconography* 9 (1984–86): 53–65; Emilia Ardissino, "I canti liturgici nel 'Purgatorio' dantesco," *Dante Studies* 108 (1990): 39–65; Andrew McCracken, "*In Omnibus Viis Tuis*: Compline in the Valley of the Rulers (*Purg.* VII–VIII)," *Dante Studies* 111 (1993): 119–29; and John C. Barnes, "Vestiges of the Liturgy in Dante's Verse," in *Dante and the Middle Ages: Literary and Historical Essays*, ed. John C. Barnes and Cormac Ó Cuilleain (Dublin, Irish Academic Press, 1995), 231–63. See also Robert M. Durling, "The Canonical Hours: Compline," additional note 5 in Robert M. Durling and Ronald L. Martinez, *Purgatorio* (New York: Oxford, 2003): 600–603, including texts of both *Salve regina* and *Tu lucis*.

8. This point is made by McCracken, "*In Omnibus Viis Tuis*," 120.

9. These observations in *ibid.*, 121–23; see also Barnes, "Vestiges of the Liturgy in Dante's Verse," 244. The serpent "volgendo ad or ad or la testa" follows the adversary's search for prey in the Psalm, "circuit quaerens quem devoret."

10. See Richard C. Trexler, *The Christian at Prayer: An Illustrated Prayer Manual Attributed to Peter the Chanter (d. 1197)* (Binghamton, N.Y.: Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 1987): 182–83, with citation of Psalm 133; for the orientation of Dante's petitioner (*Purg.* 8.11), see 195 ("quia sol oriatur in oriente, per quem Christus sol iustitiae exprimitur, ad cuius promissum etiam nos in resurrectione ut sol fulgebimus"). See also Simon Tugwell, "The Nine Ways of Prayer of St. Dominic. A Textual Study and Critical Edition," *Mediaeval Studies* 47 (1985): 1–124, esp. 81–92.

11. McCracken ("*In Omnibus Viis Tuis*," 125–27) sees the inverted order of presentation of the compline liturgical elements in the valley as coherent with the journey back to the state of innocence in Eden, in tension with the nostalgia recorded at the beginning of Canto 8.

12. For Sordello and the genre of *planh-sirventes* in these cantos, see Perugi, "Il Sordello di Dante."

13. The fullest recent account of *Purgatorio* 2 is by Gabriele Muresu, "L'inno e il canto d'amore," in *Tra gli adepti di Sodoma: saggi di semantica dantesca, Terza serie* (Rome: Bulzoni, 2002): 171–237, esp.

173–77, 184–89, 206–14. Muresu's treatment of liturgy remains cursory, but see Albert E. Wingell, "Dante, St. Augustine, and Astronomy," *Quaderni d'Italianistica* 2 (1981): 123–42; and Amilcare A. Iannucci, "Casella's Song and the Tuning of the Soul," *Thought: A Review of Culture and Idea* 65 (1990): 25–46.

14. Guglielmo Gorni, "La nuova legge del *Purgatorio*," in *Lettera nome numero: L'ordine delle cose in Dante* (Bologna: Mulino, 1990), 199–220, first published in *Studi Danteschi* 54 (1982): 53–70. For versions of "Amor che ne la mente" as palinode, see John Freccero, "Casella's Song," in *Dante and the Poetics of Conversion* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1986), first published in *Dante Studies* 91 (1973): 73–80; Robert Hollander, "*Purgatorio* II: Cato's rebuke and Dante's *saggio*," *Italica* 52 (1975): 348–63; and Teodolinda Barolini, *Dante's Poets: Textuality and Truth in the Comedy* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1984): 31–40. For Hollander, Casella's rendition is a "siren song" that tempts to backsliding; for Freccero, it is the reference to philosophy that is problematic, for philosophy occasioned Dante's truancy from Beatrice; for Barolini, the canzone's backward-looking evocation to the "consolations" of philosophy is an error, though a slight one (cf. "picciol fallo"), and Dante's placement of the canto is a demotion with respect to the citation of "Donne ch'avete" later in the *cantica*. Of the many *lecturae dantis*, Marti's "Dolcezza di memorie" is nuanced and balanced on the question; John Scott, "The Unfinished *Convivio* as a Pathway to the Comedy," *Dante Studies* 113 (1995): 31–56, outlines the case for continuities between the two works.

15. The "anime affannate," and other echoes of Francesca are observed in Barolini, *Dante's Poets*, 33, and Gorni, "La nuova legge del *Purgatorio*," 203–4.

16. See Vasoli's note, in Dante Alighieri, *Opere minori* 1/2, 274, glossing "Amor che ne la mente": "nel verso confluisce e si 'converte' la dolcezza di 'Amor sì dolce mi si fa sentire' di 'Donne ch'avete,' 6, di 'e ragiona d'amor sì dolcemente' di 'Gentil pensiero,' 3, e di 'di cui parlava me sì dolcemente,' di 'Voi ch'intendendo,' 18: che spiega, a distanza d'anni, 'la dolcezza ancor dentro mi suona di *Purg.* 2.114."

17. Perhaps the simplest explanation of the fault in Casella's singing is that of Renato Poggioni, who sees the performance as premature in place and time ("If Cato 'censures' Casella for indulging in song, it is only because what Casella does is improper in the Ante-*Purgatorio*, as it would be in any purginal place of the sacred mountain. Yet the same musical performance would have been fitting and seemly in the Earthly Paradise." See "'Dante poco tempo silvano,' or a Pastoral Oasis in the *Commedia*" in *The Oaten Flute: Essays in Pastoral Poetry and the Pastoral Ideal* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1975): 135–52, at 323 n.15, first published in the *Annual Report of the Dante Society*, 80 (1962): 1–20. This is also essentially the view of Muresu ("L'inno e il canto d'amore," 214–16). Claudia Elisabeth Schurr, *Dante e la musica: Dimensione, contenuto, e finalità del messaggio musicale della 'Divina Commedia'* (Perugia: Università degli Studi di Perugia, 1994): 85–86, argues for the canzone as continuous with the *cantica* and the link of the pilgrim's living breath ("per lo spirare," 2.68) to the credo of *Purgatorio* 24 and the angelic singing at 30.91–93.

18. These and other details noted by Ignazio Baldelli, "Linguistica e interpretazione: l'amore di Catone, di Casella, e di Carlo Martello e le canzoni del *Convivio* II e III," in *Miscellanea di studi linguistici in onore di Walter Belardi* (Rome: Il Calamo, 1994): 535–55, esp. 541–42: the expression "l'anima che ascolta" in canzone line 6 is "l'anima mia" at *Purgatorio* 2.110; "quella gente che qui s'innamora" in line 24 of the canzone recurs in the canto as the enthralled auditors (2.114–15, "quella gente / . . . sì contenti" but *gente* also at 11, 58, and 71). The key term *amor*, which appears six times in the lyric (twice in the first stanza, as first and last words, and in every stanza but the congedo) is partly echoed in Canto 2 by the homonymic *allor*, *ancor* in consecutive lines 113–14.

19. Barolini (*Dante's Poets*, 38–39) contends that the distraction the lady (Philosophy) causes in the canzone ("lo intelletto sov'esso disvia") is replicated by the distraction caused by Casella's canzone performance in the *Commedia*. But the two cases are not quite analogous: in the canzone the speaker is derailed because insufficient to render adequate praise (an instance of the ineffability topos); in the canto, the pilgrim and other auditors are absorbed by the sweetness of the song (illustrating, as often noted, the power of music as Dante describes it in *Convivio* 2.13.24; see Iannucci, "Casella's Song," 40–41).

20. That the two rhymes are correlated appears significant: in the canzone (lines 22, 26, 27), the rhyme attends the action of Love: ". . . amor mi face"; "amor fa sentir de la sua pace"; "suo esser tanto a Quei che lel da piace"; in the canto (2.95, 97, 99), of the angel: "leva quando e cui li piace"; "di giusto voler lo suo si face"; ". . . tolto / chi ha voluto intrar, con tutta pace."

21. The canzone rhyming words *disdegnosa*, *tenebrosa* at lines 77 and 79 link the poem with its sonnet counterpart in the *Vita nuova*, "Gentil pensero" (rhymes on *-ente*, occur four times, and on *-osa* (*pensosa* and *pietosa*: lines 9, 13), and with the ballad which the canzone corrects, "Voi che savete"; compare lines 2–3, ending on *pietosa*, *disdegnosa*. In addition, the sonnet rhymes four times on *-ente*, and the ballata includes the rhyming words *piace* and *face*; but this does not exhaust the three-cornered parallels.

22. With references to first, second, and last stanzas the canto thus includes mention of the three parts of the canzone distinguished in the *Convivio* prose commentary (the first stanza, stanzas 2–4, and the last stanza). If we include the first canto of *Purgatorio*, further echoes appear: canzone rhyming word *dichina* at line 41 is echoed at *Purgatorio* 1.113; *aiutata* in rhyme at canzone line 53 by *aiuta* in rhyme at 1.68; and the rhyme of *Paradiso* with *riso*, *viso*, *riso* (canzone lines 56–57, 60–61) is retained at *Purgatorio* 1.95, 97, 99 (*viso*, *sorpreso*, *paradiso*). Canzone *maraviglia* in rhyme at line 53 appears, out of rhyme, at both *Purgatorio* 1.134 and 2.82. With these parallels, all stanzas of the canzone are represented.

23. See also Proverbs 8.27–30: "Quando praeprabat caelos, aderam" versus "costei pensò chi mosse l'universo" (line 72). The whole passage from Proverbs is translated by Dante at *Convivio* 3.15.16. Vasoli's commentary (*Opere minori* 1/2, 275) has further suggestions (e.g., Eccl. 24:8, "Gyrum caeli circuivi sola" versus "Amor che ne la mente," line 19: "non vede il sol che tutto 'l mondo gira"). See also Massimiliano Chiamenti, *Dante Alighieri traduttore* (Florence: Le Lettere, 1995), 53; and, for Dante's art of citation, Christopher Kleinhenz, "Dante and the Art of Citation," in *Dante Now: Current Trends in Dante Studies*, ed. Theodore J. Cachey Jr. and Christian Moevs (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1995), 43–61.

24. "Umilia ogni perverso" (lines 70–71) alludes as well to the *Magnificat*, sung at every vespers office, including the words "deposuit potentes de sede" (Luke 1.52). The discourse of humility in the canzone pointedly recalls *Vita nuova* on Beatrice as the form of humility ("Donna pietosa" [lines 69–72]) and her own destructive effect on those who are evil ("Donne ch'avete" [line 40]). The extensive parallels that link "Donne ch'avete" and "Amor che ne la mente," are summarized in Barolini, *Dante's Poets*, 37; that this matchup implies Dante's demotion of the later poem is hardly self-evident.

25. Vasoli, *Opere minori* 1/2, 275–76, 287–88.

26. See especially lines 32 and 55. For the etymological understanding of Epiphany as manifestation, see note 107. For Christ's baptism as an epiphany, see Guillelmus Durantus [Durandus], *Rationale divinatorum officiorum*, I–IV, ed. A. Davril and T. M. Thibodeau [*Corpus Christianorum continuatio medievalis*, CXL], 3 vols. (Turnhout: Brepols, 1995), 6.16.3, 5.

27. Thomas Aquinas also refers to Psalm 84:9 when commenting on Psalm 44: "Operatio linguae est, quod per eam diffunditur sapientia cordis ad alios; per calamum autem designatur quod sapientia quae est in corde, transfunditur in materiam sensibilem, scilicet pergamenum. Deus autem et loquitur et scribit: loquitur, quando transfundit sapientiam suam in mentes rationales: Psal. 84: *audiam quid loquatur in me dominus Deus*." In *psalms Davidis expositio* (Parma Edition, 1863), online at www.corpusthomisticum.org/cps41.html. And see note 114, below.

28. "Est et alius prophetiae modus, caeteris dignior, quando scilicet ex sola Spiritus sancti inspiratione, remoto omni exteriori adminiculo facti, vel dicti, vel visionis vel somnii, prophetatur. Hoc modo prophetavit David, scilicet solius Spiritus sancti instinctu. Unde in sequenti: *Audiam quid loquatur in me Dominus Deus*" (PL 190 58C–D). The idea is reiterated when Peter glosses the psalm itself: "Quia *audiam* adversus a strepitu mundi qui inquietat foris *quid loquatur in me* interius Dominus Deus, [Aug., Cassiod., Gl. int.] scilicet Spiritus sanctus, *quoniam loquetur pacem* aeternam, cui nihil adversi est" (PL 190.797A–B).

29. See Domenico De Robertis, *Il libro della Vita nuova*, 2nd ed. (Florence: Sansoni, 1970): 101–5 (for use of Psalm 50.17) and 116–20 (on *canticum novum*). For the glossed psalter as a model in the

Vita nuova, see Thomas Stillinger, *The Song of Troilus: Lyric Authority in the Medieval Book* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1992), 44–117. For David's psalmody as an inspiration for Dante in *Paradiso*, see Barolini, *Dante's Poets*, 277–79; Jeffrey T. Schnapp, *The Transfiguration of History at the Center of Dante's Paradiso* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1994), esp. 160–69; and my “*Paradiso XV: The Tempered Soul in the Tempered Poem*,” forthcoming in *California lectura Dantis: Paradiso*, ed. Allen Mandelbaum and Anthony Oldcorn (Berkeley: University of California Press, forthcoming).

30. Text in *Il Canzoniere di Niccolò de' Rossi*, ed. Furio Brugnolo (Padua: Antenore, 1974): 184 (no. 324). Referring to the *Sanctus* as an angelic Hosanna and “hymno divino” reflects contemporary technical terminology for the *Sanctus*. See Gunilla Iversen, *Chanter avec les anges: Poésie dans la messe médiévale, interprétations et commentaires* (Paris: Cerf, 2001): 191. On Checolino, see also Brugnolo, *Il Canzoniere*, 176 (no. 307); and M. S. Elsheikh, “I musicisti di Dante (Casella, Lippo, Scochetto) in Niccolò de' Rossi,” *Studi danteschi* 48 (1971): 151–66.

31. Iannucci (“Casella's Song,” 35) suggests that mention of Mars might invoke the discussion of music at *Convivio* 2.13.20–21; the astronomical references, he observes, invoke the *musica mundana* of the cosmos (36).

32. The first line of the canto in this case is like the horizon itself (for the distinction of the astronomical and real horizon, see Marti, “Dolcezza di memorie,” 95; and Muresu, “L'inno e il canto d'amore,” 173–75). This exactitude is coordinated with other temporal indicators of the first day on the mountain: noon is reached at *Purgatorio* 4.137 (while night, circling opposite, overshadows Morocco, in the last line of the canto: “cuopre la notte già col piè Morrocco” [*Purg.* 4.139]) and sunset might occur between 7.54 and 7.60 (“mentre che l'orizzonte il dì tien chiuso”) or possibly only at 8.1 (“Era già l'ora che volge il disio”). A similar exactitude is found at the center of the cantica, 17.70, midmost line of the canto, where the rising of the earth's shadow at sunset brakes the pilgrim's upward motion. Thus the sun's motion acts as “fren de l'arte” (33.141) governing the verses and cantos of the *cantica*.

33. Singleton, “In exitu Israel de Aegypto,” in the *78th Annual Report of Dante Society of America* (1960): 1–24, suggested how the narrative pattern of Exodus was manifest in the *Purgatorio*. See also, for example, Dunstan J. Tucker, “In exitu Israel de Aegypto: The *Divine Comedy* in the Light of the Easter Liturgy,” *American Benedictine Review* 11 (1960): 43–61, esp. 53–54; Peter Armour, “The Theme of Exodus in the First Two Cantos of the *Purgatorio*,” in *Dante Soundings, Eight Literary and Historical Essays*, ed. David Nolan (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 1981), 59–99; and Kevin Marti, “Dante's Baptism and the Theology of the Body in *Purgatorio* 1–2,” *Traditio* 45 (1989–90): 495–520.

34. See Gian Roberto Sarolli's entry on the psalm “In exitu Israel” in *Enciclopedia dantesca* 3 (Rome: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, 1971), 421. The use of Psalm 113 reflects a persistence of the optimistic, triumphal scenario of death prevalent in earlier liturgies: see Damien Sicard, *La liturgie de la mort dans l'église latine des origines à la réforme carolingienne* (Münster Westfalen: Aschendorffsche, 1978), 68–69; and F. S. Paxton, *Christianizing Death: The Creation of a Ritual Process in Early Medieval Europe* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press), 39–40.

35. Dante's specification that the psalm is sung entire means that the souls sing as far as modern Psalm 114.17–18, “Non mortui laudabunt te, Domine; Neque omnes qui descendunt in infernum,” which continues the use of Psalm 113 as a funeral psalm and contrasts the present scene with the descent into Hell.

36. In the illustrations of the *officium mortuorum* of the fifteenth-century Rohan book of hours, the stages of the burial ritual are juxtaposed with the Exodus from Egypt led by Moses. See *The Rohan Master: A Book of Hours, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris (Ms. Latine 9471)*, ed. Marcel Thomas and trans. Katherine W. Carson (New York: Braziller, 1973), nos. 63–79. Legends are drawn from the French *Bible moralisée*; for example, no. 71, where the office illustration shows the burial of the dead and the accompanying marginal illustration is of the Israelites joyfully crossing the Red Sea (“Ce que le peuple chante et font grant joye senefie les beneurez qui sont en celestiale joye et chantent et font louange a Dieu”); see also no. 67–70.

37. See Tucker, “In exitu Israel de Aegypto,” 43–61, esp. 53–54; and Chiamenti, *Dante Alighieri traduttore*, 39, 226. Instances include *Purgatorio* 18.133–35 (“Prima fue / morta la gente a cui il mar

s'aperse, / che vedesse Iordan le rede sue"), which while referring to Numbers 14.20–33, adopts the phraseology of Psalm 113 ("mare vidit et fugi . . . Iordanus conversus est retrorsum"; see also 28.75, "non s'aperse"); *Paradiso* 22.94–96 ("Iordan volto retrorso / più fu, e 'l mar fuggir . . . / mirabile a veder, che qui 'l soccorso"), which uses sight of the miracle to echo the psalm text, the sea being personified as it sees the exodus and flees ("mare vidisti et fugisti"); *Paradiso* 25.55–56, where the pilgrim ". . . d' Egitto / vegna in Ierusalemme"; and *Paradiso* 31.85–87, where the pilgrim testifies that through Beatrice he was "di servo tratto a libertate, / per tutte quelle vie, per tutt' i modi / che di ciò fare avei la potestate," recalling Dante's glossing version of the psalm in the Latin epistle, as "exitus animae ab hoc corruptio servitutis ad aeternae gloriae libertatem; with *potestate* recurring from the *Convivio* version of the psalm (2.1.7: "essa [l'anima] . . . fatta santa e libera nella sua potestate"). This inventory remains far from complete.

38. For the antiphon, see Sicard 69–70. The bosom of Abraham is implicit in the text of *Purgatorio* as the *seno* of the valley of the princes (7.76), the *grembo* of the valley (7.38), that of Mary from which the angels descend to confound the serpent (8.37), and the "*seno* / al grande ardore" on the terrace of the lustful (25.121–22). For the "bosom of Abraham" in relation to the doctrine of limbo and purgatory, see Jacques Le Goff, *The Birth of Purgatory*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 46–47, 122, 157–58. In relation to the rituals for the dying, see Anca Bratu-Minott, "From the Bosom of Abraham to the Beatific Vision: On Some Medieval Images of the Soul's Journey to Heaven," in *Death and Dying in the Middle Ages*, ed. E. E. DuBruck and Barbara I. Gusick (New York: Peter Lang, 1999): 189–217, with illustrations. Paradise is represented as Abraham's bosom in the Baptistery of San Giovanni in Florence, with an inscription from Matthew 25.34. See *Purgatorio* 27.58 and note in Durling and Martinez, *Purgatorio*, 467.

39. Other uses of *suscipere* in the *Ordo commendationis animae*: see S. J. P. Van Dijk, *Sources of the Modern Roman Liturgy: The Ordinals by Haymo of Faversham and Related Documents* (Leiden: Brill, 1963): 2:392–93; and *Le pontificale de la curie romane au XIIIe siècle*, ed. Monique Gouillet, Guy Lobrichon, and Eric Palazzo (Paris: Cerf, 2004), chap. LI (*ordo commendationis animae*), no. 5 (346); no. 7 (350); no. 13 (354); no. 19 (356); chap. LII (*ordo sepeliendi*), no. 3 (358). As often noted (Marti, "Dolcezza di memorie," 96–97), the angel's actions and gathering echo Charon's movements in Hell; see, for example, *Inferno* 3.82, "ed ecco verso noi venir per nave" versus *Purgatorio* 2.13, 17, "Ed ecco . . . / un lume per lo mar venir sì ratto"; *Inferno* 3.110, "loro accennando, tutte le raccoglie" versus *Purgatorio* 2.104, ". . . sempre quivi si ricoglie; 3.115–17, ". . . il mal seme d'Adamo / gittansi di quel lito ad una ad una / per cenni come augel per suo richiamo" versus *Purgatorio* 2.49–50, "poi fece il segno lor di santa croce; / ond' ei si gittar tutti in su la piaggia."

40. For the reception in heaven as a triumph, see Ernst Kantorowicz, "The Lord's Advent and the Enigmatic Panels in the Doors of Santa Sabina," *Art Bulletin* 26 (1944): 207–36, esp. 206. See also Gordon Kipling, *Enter the King: Theatre, Liturgy, and Ritual in the Medieval Civic Triumph* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 203. Kipling observes that in the light of *adventus* imagery, "each funeral is a coronation, each saint a king who enters the celestial city in triumph to be crowned in glory." Beatrice's father, for example, "di questa vita uscendo . . ." at *Vita nuova* 22.1 makes an anagogical *exitus* and the delirium-vision of Beatrice's death follows the same conventions. See my "Mourning Beatrice: The Rhetoric of Threnody in the *Vita nuova*," *MLN* 113 (1998): 1–29. Dante echoes the commendation prayers at *Convivio* 4.28.5 (see Vasoli's note, citing Busnelli-Vandelli).

41. Van Dijk, *Sources*, 2:178. For uses of Matthew 25 elsewhere in the liturgy see the following: Durandus, *Rationale* VI.96.44 links the Beatitudes to "Venite, benedictus"; at VI.2.2 the third advent of Christ, the advent in death, is associated with Matthew 24.43–44, referring to the same unpredictable "coming of the Lord," as in Matthew 25.34–35. And see Barnes, "Vestiges of the Liturgy in Dante's Verse," 264.

42. Wingell ("Dante, St. Augustine, and Astronomy," 125–26) infers that the souls transported to Purgatory have sung the entire vespers service in the time taken to cross from Ostia to Purgatory; there is scant textual warrant for this, however.

43. The parallel is suggested by Marti ("Dolcezza di memorie," 95); for the liturgical implications of the *Epistola*, see Gian Roberto Sarolli, *Prolegomena alla 'Divina Commedia'* (Florence: Olschki,

1971): 256–57; and especially Paola Rigo, “Tempo liturgico nell’epistola ai principi e ai popoli d’Italia,” in *Memoria classica e memoria biblica in Dante* (Florence: Olschki 1994), 33–44.

44. The *Benedictus* concludes: “In quibus visitavit nos, oriens ex alto, Illuminare his qui in tenebris et in umbra mortis sedent: ad dirigendos pedes nostros in viam pacis.” On Advent and Nativity liturgies, see Durandus, *Rationale* VI.13.2, “in dominica veniens oriens ex alto nos illuminaret . . . quoniam habitantibus in regione umbrae mortis, lux orta est eis.” For the imperial *adventus* and Palm Sunday, see Kantorowicz, “The Lord’s Advent,” 207–31 *passim*.

45. For Palm Sunday and Advent, see Durandus, *Rationale* VI.12.17 and VI.67.9: “Significat etiam quod Dominus ad nos veniet et ad aeterna tabernacula nos ducet.” Hermann J. Graf recognizes in the Palm Sunday liturgy a summary of Christ’s advent, triumph over Hell, Resurrection, and Ascension. See *Palmenweihe und Palmenprozession in der lateinischen Liturgie* (Kaldenkircher: Steyler, 1959), esp. 144–47. On the advent to Hell, see Mark Musa, *Advent at the Gates* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1964): 71–109. For the advent in the Mass introit, see Innocent III, *De sacro altaris mysterio*, II, 18, p. 127; and Durandus, *Rationale* IV.5.1.

46. For Advent in the *Vita nuova* and the procession of Purgatory, see my “The Poetics of Advent Liturgies: Dante’s *Vita nova* and *Purgatorio*,” in *Le culture di Dante: Studi in onore di Robert Hollander* (Florence: Franco Cesati, 2004), 271–304. For its presence in Hell, see my “‘Anastasio papa guardo’ (*Inferno* 11.8–9): The Descent into Hell and Dante’s Heretics,” *Mediaevalia* 29, no. 2 (2009): 15–30.

47. See Vittorio Russo, “‘Voi che ’ntendendo’ e ‘Amor che ne la mente’: La diffrazione dei significati secondo l’auto-commento del *Convivio*,” *Studi Danteschi* 61 (1989): 219–29.

48. The two passages are discussed together by Marianne Shapiro, *Dante and the Knot of Body and Soul* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1998), 6–14, but not in relation to the liturgy. It is probably significant that the final use of *nodo* in the poem describes the mutual inherence of the three persons of the Trinity.

49. Later in the canto (23.32–36), Dante’s account of the emaciated souls, “chi nel viso de li uomini legge omo,” and the accompanying rhymes (*como*, *pomo*) closely reflect the assonant rhymes, with double o, on *nodo odo modo*; emphasis on the legibility of the word in the faces of the gluttons sets up a scene of actual reading. Note the lexical relation of the lips, *labia mea*, to Forese’s facial appearance, his *labbia* (23.47); in *Ecloge* 1.52–54 Dante marks the vernacular as spoken by female lips, “femineo . . . trita labello.”

50. For an overview of processional motion in the *Commedia*, see Christopher Kleinhenz, “Movement and Meaning in the *Divine Comedy*: Toward an Understanding of Dante’s Processional Poetics,” Bernado Lecture no. 14 (Binghamton, N.Y.: Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2005).

51. Domenico De Robertis, *Libro*, 101–5. See also Guglielmo Gorni, “La teoria del ‘cominciamento,’” in *Il nodo della lingua e il verbo d’amore: Studi su Dante e altri duecentisti* (Florence: Olschki, 1981), 145–86; and Domenico De Robertis, “Poetica del (ri)cominciamento: *Incipit Vita nova*,” in *Dal Primo all’ultimo Dante* (Florence: Le Lettere 2001), 103–10.

52. See the *Rule of St. Benedict*, trans. Anthony C. Meisel and M. L. del Mastro (New York: Doubleday, 1975), chap. 9: “The night office should commence with the versicle ‘Lord, you shall open my lips and my mouth shall declare your praise.’” On these opening *preces*, see Andrew Hughes, *Medieval Manuscripts for Mass and Office: A Guide to Their Organization and Terminology* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982), 55–56.

53. Similar phraseology occurs both earlier and later in the poem, with reference to liturgical singing, to confession of sin, and to a future “speaking” of the poem: see *Purgatorio* 7.93 (“move bocca a li altrui canti”), 8.14 (“le uscio di bocca”), 25.19 (“apri la bocca”), 30.99 (“de la bocca . . . uscì del petto”), 31.33 (“e le labbra a fatica la formarò”); and *Paradiso* 1.87 (“la bocca aprio”), 24.119 (“la bocca t’aperse”), 27.65 (“apri la bocca”). Dante’s speaking of the first *Convivio* canzone follows a pattern similar to that of “Donne ch’avete”; see *Convivio* 2.12.8–9 (“quasi maravigliandomi apersi la bocca. . . . Cominciai dunque a dire . . .”).

54. See Mario Casella, *Studi danteschi* 18 (1934): 105–26, esp. 108; and, for Ivo’s text, PL 196.1195A–B: “De aliis nempe copiosa in libris occurrit materia; hujus vero aut tota intus est, aut nusquam est, quia non ab exterioribus ad interiora suavitatis suae secreta transponit, sed ab interioribus

ad exteriora transmittit: Solus proinde de ea digne loquitur, qui secundum quod cor dictat verba componit. Ne mireris igitur si alium audire de ipsa mallem quam loqui ipse. Illum, inquam, audire vellem qui *calamum linguae* tingeret in sanguine cordis, quia tunc vera et veneranda doctrina est, cum quod lingua loquitur conscientia dictat, charitas suggerit, et spiritus ingerit" (emphases mine).

55. Ivo's text depends, in fact, on Augustine's *In psalmum XLIV enarratio* (PL 36.493–513).

56. Auerbach, "Sermo humilis," in *Literary Language and Its Public in Late Latin Antiquity and in the Middle Ages* (New York: Pantheon, 1965), 58–59. See Dante, *Epistola* 3.1 ("Eructuavit incendium uel dilectionis verbum confidentie vehementis ad me . . ."), beginning a letter to Cino da Pistoia on the subject of a new love; *De vulgari eloquentiae* 1.11.6 ("crudeliter accentuando eructuant"), describing Istrian speech; and 2.4.2 ("rationabiliter eructare presumpsimus"), affirming that vernacular rhymers are poets.

57. At *Ecloghe* 2.40, Dante's reference to the poet's pipe as *arundo* permits a pun on the *calamus* of the writer as well. Guido da Pisa, in the prologue to his commentary, uses the psalm text to speak of Dante's inspired authorship: "Re vera, potest ipse dicere verbum prophete dicentis: 'Deus dedit michi linguam eruditam'; et illud: 'Lingua mea calamus scribe velociter scribentis.' Ipse enim fuit calamus Spiritus Sancti, cum quo calamo ipse Spiritus Sanctus velociter scripsit nobis et penas damnatorum et gloriam beatorum" (DDP). Except for Fraticelli, cited in Campi 1888–93 (DDP), commentators do not associate the pilgrim's statement to Bonagiunta with Psalm 44.

58. Dante's passage lacks a term equivalent to *eructare* in Psalm 44: some of its force is registered, however, in Bonagiunta's use of *trarre* to describe the "drawing forth" of "Donne ch'avete" (*Purg.* 24.50); compare to *trarre* used for Christ extracting souls from Hell (*Inf.* 4.55) and for the tearing away of Marsyas's pelt (*Par.* 1.20). See also Franco Suitner, "Colui che fore trasse le nove rime," in *Dante, Petrarca, e altra poesia antica* (Fiesole: Cadmo, 2005): 77–84.

59. Innocent III, *De commendatione cantoris*: "Sicut enim atramentum de cornu scriba per calamum imprimit pergamento, sic Spiritus Sanctus veritatis scientiam de Divinitatis arcano, per linguam Prophetæ cordi perfudit humano" (PL 217.949A). That the moving force is the Holy Spirit is explicit in psalm commentary, as in Aquinas, *In psalmos Davidis expositio*, who follows Innocent here: "Et cujus calamus est? *Scribae velociter scribentis*, spiritus sancti qui velociter scribit in corde hominum."

60. Psalm 44:4 ("Accingere gladio tuo super femur tuum, potentissime") was used in knighting ceremonies and is relevant to Cacciaguida's investment of the pilgrim as a poet. See R. M. Durling, appendix 1 ("*Nascentis militie dies*") in R. M. Durling and R. L. Martinez, *Time and the Crystal: Studies in Dante's 'Rime petrose'* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990): 261–67; and my "*Paradiso XV*."

61. Van Dijk, *Sources*, II.32, 39.

62. Applied to Dante, this associates the poet's act of giving mental birth to his poetry to that of the inner workings of the Trinity. See Giuseppe Mazzotta, *Dante Poet of the Desert* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1979), 192–226; John Freccero, "Manfred's Wounds and the Poetics of the *Purgatorio*," in *Dante: the Poetics of Conversion* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1986), 195–208, esp. 200–205; and my article, "The Pilgrim's Answer to Bonagiunta and the Poetics of the Spirit," *Stanford Italian Review* 4 (1983): 37–63.

63. According to Dionysius the Areopagite, as Aquinas relates in his comment on Psalm 44, *eructavit* refers to the procession of the Word from the Father: ". . . tamen Dionysius utitur 2 cap. *de divinis Nomin.* ubi introducit hoc verbum, *eructavit* etc. et secundum istam expositionem commendatur a patre tripliciter. Primo describitur ejus emanatio. Secundo ejus virtus, ibi, *dico*. Tertio ejus operatio, ibi, *lingua*" (*In psalmos Davidis expositio*).

64. Bonagiunta's *mormorava* in the same passage may refer to an action of the mouth analogous to the monastic practice of ruminating upon the psalms. See Jean Leclercq, *The Love of Learning and the Desire for God: A Study of Monastic Culture*, trans. C. Misrahi, 2nd ed. (New York: Fordham University Press, 1977), 89–90; for this concept in Dante, see Albert L. Rossi, "The Poetics of Resurrection: Virgil's Bees (*Paradiso XXXI*, 1–12)," *Romanic Review* 80 (1989): 305–24, esp. 321–24. Dante uses *ruminare* at *Purgatorio* 27.76 and 91 in reference to the wayfarers compared to pasturing sheep and meditating on the stars; the variant form *nugumare* ("chewing the cud") is used of exegetical

activity at *Purgatorio* 16.99; see also *Ecloghe* 1.60, in reference to the sheep that is milked of the first ten cantos of *Paradiso*, “modo ruminat herbas.”

65. Gorni, “Il nodo della lingua,” in *Il nodo della lingua e il verbo d’amore*, 13–21, esp. 16–21, associates Bonagiunta’s impediment with the muteness that afflicts the Baptist’s father Zechariah; later, his mouth is opened (“apertum est autem illico os eius, et lingua eius, et loquebatur benedicens Deum”) referring to the words that follow (Luke 2:68–79, the *Benedictus*, the liturgical canticle for the office of lauds; Gorni does not refer to liturgy, however). Lino Pertile, “Il nodo di Bonagiunta, le penne di Dante e il dolce stil novo,” *Lettere Italiane* 46 (1994): 44–75, followed by Lucia Lazzarini, “Bonagiunta, il nodo e la vista recuperata,” in *Operosa parva: per Gianni Antonini*, ed. Domenico De Robertis and Franco Gavazzeni (Verona: Valdonega, 1996): 47–54, see the *nodo* as a reference to the jesses that impede falcons from flying. Luciano Rossi, “*Purgatorio* XXIV,” in *Lectura dantis turicensis*, ed. Michelangelo Picone and Georges Güntert (Florence: Franco Cesati, 2003), 373–87, critiques Pertile’s ornithological metaphors and reaffirms scribal tropes; compare also Mark Musa, “Le ali di Dante (e il dolce stil nuovo): *Purg.* XXIV,” *Convivium* 34 (1966): 361–67. But Dante’s bold troping exemplifies the freedom to traverse figurative registers; compare Innocent III: “*Lingua mea est calamus scribae velociter scribentis: id est instrumentum Spiritus Sancti celeriter inspirantis, qui non sub humano cruciatu deliberat, sed repente ubicumque vult spirat: secundum quod alibi legitur, quia factus est repente de coelo sonus, tanquam advenientis spiritus vehementis*” (*De commendatione cantoris*, PL 190. 950A). For the figurative volatility of a “poetics of the Spirit,” see Martinez, “The Pilgrim’s Answer to Bonagiunta,” 60–63.

66. Chapter 38 of the *Rule* prescribes the reading at meals; chapters 39–40 discourage excess in eating and drinking; see *The Rule of St. Benedict*, trans. Anthony C. Meisel and M. L. del Mastro (New York: Doubleday, 1975): 79–81.

67. See *In psalmos Davidis expositio*: “Primo Propheta coelestibus epulis saginatus, praeconia Dei se eructaturum promittit.” Aquinas emphasizes the speaking of the word as the result of the fullness of the heart: “Eructatio ex nimia plenitudine, sive repletionem procedit: in quo signatur quod ex abundantia devotionis et sapientiae loquitur: Matth. 12: ex abundantia cordis os loquitur” (PL 191.437).

68. That the psalm phrase expresses moral discipline in general is attested by *Monarchia* 3.15.9: human cupidity would prevail without the guidance of empire and papacy: “Nisi homines, tamquam equi, sua bestialitate vagantes ‘in camo et freno’ compescerentur in via.”

69. For *ferza*, *freno*, *camo*, see *Purgatorio* 6.88, 13.39–40 (“ferza”), 14.143 (“duro camo”) and 147, 16.93, 20.55, 25.119.

70. The ideal nourishment of the eucharistic meal is suggested for the gluttons by Christ’s words on the cross, addressing God, as he becomes the sacrifice for mankind (*Purg.* 23.74–75; the cry “Eli” echoes the words Dante gives to the first Adam, opening his mouth to joyfully address God, in *De vulgari eloquentia* 1.4.4). The antithetical meal is the cannibalism of Maria of Jerusalem (*Purg.* 23.28–30), which Christian tradition rendered as a grotesque, antisemitic parody of the Eucharist (Martinez, “Lament and Lamentation,” 65–67); the mouth as site of both nourishment and punishment is reiterated in the vengeance to be visited on immodest Florentine women (23.98–111).

71. In Bonagiunta’s exchange with the pilgrim, the verbal correlation of the scribal metaphors (“di retro al dittator” [*Purg.* 24.59]; and “. . . da l’uno a l’altro stilo” [24.62]) with the arrangement of birds in flight (“volan più a fretta e vanno in filo” [24.66]), and the subsequent departure of Forese as a cavalryman (“qual esce . . . / lo cavalier di schiera che cavalchi” [24.94–95]) underscores that poetic practice can be described with the metaphors of moral and physical disciplines.

72. Luciano Rossi, “*Purgatorio* XXIV,” *Lectura Dantis Turicensis*, vol. 2, , ed. G. Güntert e M. Picone (Florence: Cesati, 2001), 373–387, insists on the associations in contemporary lyric of Bonagiunta’s *nodo* with the “amoroso nodo” binding lovers (383). This system of metaphor also extends to the psalmist’s bit and bridle: in Guido delle Colonne’s canzone, illustrated in the Palatino anthology (*Concordanza della lingua poetica italiana delle origini* [CLPIO], ed. D’Arco Silvio Avalle [Milan: Ricciardi, 1992]: P102) with an image of Love riding the poet, it is Amor that holds the bridle (*freno*): “Amore che lungiamente m’ai menato / a freno stretto senza riposanza, / alarga le tue redine . . .” (CLPIO, V305, 1–3). Dante quotes this incipit at *De vulgari eloquentiae* 2.5.4.

73. More could be said of the liturgical framing of *Purgatorio* 23–24: the pilgrim's account of hearing dictation within, taking note, and expressing that dictation externally fits better than accounts of strictly evangelical inspiration by which Gregory the Great was supposed inspired in his ear by the dove of the Holy Spirit to dictate the corpus of Roman liturgy to an attendant scribe, a corpus then recopied and imparted to all Christendom; see S. J. P. Van Dijk: "Gregory the Great, Founder of the Urban *Schola cantorum*," *Ephemerides liturgicae* 77 (1963): 335–56.

74. Ovid's line 111 ("flumina iam lactis, iam flumina nectaris ibant") also adapted at *Purgatorio* 28.144, "nettare è questo di che ciascon dice." Dante draws on the same Ovidian passage at 22.148–50.

75. Psalm 31 is chanted at the first nocturn of the regular Monday matins; it is preceded by the first part of Psalm 30, "In te domine speravi," which Dante draws on in Canto 30.83–84. Its other principal use is during the second nocturns of matins on All Saints, where it is part of a summary of the liturgy (incorporating elements from the feast of St. Michael the Archangel, the Virgin at the Nativity, the Dedication of a Church, and the feast of St. John the Baptist); this may have recommended it to Dante's use of it as summary of the beatitudes. See Van Dijk, *Sources*, II, 167–69.

76. Cavalcanti's text is in Guido Cavalcanti, *Rime*, ed. Letterio Cassata (Anzio: de Rubéis, 1993), 206–9. The word *donna* is the exception; many *pastourelles*, however, refer to the shepherdess as a *dame*. See *The Medieval Pastourelle*, trans. and ed. William D. Paden Jr. (New York: Garland, 1987), 293 and 387. This meets Peter Dronke's objection to emphasizing the full range of the pastorella here. See "Dante's Earthly Paradise: Towards an Interpretation of *Purgatorio* XXVIII," *Romanische Forschungen* 82 (1970): 467–87, esp. 478; but note his emphasis on Matelda as syncretically "the pagan goddess" and the "resident physicist" of Eden.

77. The rhyme on *innamorata* and *peccata* restates at the summit of the mountain, the opposition Virgil draws in his central discourse on Love, where *amore* is set against *errore*: 17.92–94 and 18.14–15 ("... amore, a cui reduci / ogne buono operare e 'l suo contraro ..."). In Eden *error* and *amor* are reunited.

78. For Matelda as recreating a pastorella, see C. S. Singleton, *Journey to Beatrice* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1958), 214–16. Theoretical statements on the courtship of rustic women and on the bucolic poem treat violence as typical. See Andreas Capellanus, *De arte honeste amandi* (Paden, *The Medieval Pastourelle*, 54, no. 15: "violento potiri amplexum") and John of Garland, *Parisiana poetria* (Paden, *ibid.*, 121, no. 39: "quomodo iuvenis oppressa nympham").

79. Ambrose in his *Exameron* V (12) 36: "Qui enim sensum hominis gerens non erubescat sine psalmodum celebritate diem claudere, cum etiam minutissimae aves sollemni devotione et dulci carmine ortus dierum ac noctium prosequantur?" (*CSEL* 32.1, 170). For the topos of birdsong in *pastourelles*, see Paden, *The Medieval Pastourelle*, 49 (no. 12, 15: Walter of Chatillon, "concentus avium"); 121 (no. 39, 1: "cum citharizat avis silvis ..."); 297 (no. 116.8–9: "oiseaus menanz joie / trop grant en lor latin"); 401 (no. 154.1: "... cil oisel / chantent tuit a haut cri"); also 285, 305, 313.

80. See Victoria Kirkham, "*Purgatorio* XXVIII," in *Lectura dantis virginiana* 12 (suppl., 1993): 411–31; 412, 426, for the *Aeneid* and Aeolus. Dante's interest in Virgil's episode is seen in *Vita nuova* 25.9.

81. Topoi of the pastorella genre: she sings, see Paden, *The Medieval Pastourelle*, 101 (no. 31, 9: "chantoit un chansonete"), 135 (no. 44, 3–4: "une pastore ai trouvee / chantant ..."), 153 (no. 51, 6: "canens cum cicuta"), 173 (no. 63, 9: "notoit et chantoit"), 183 (no. 66, 8: "et chantoit un son d'amors"), 219 (no. 78, 5–6: "s'oi chanter a haute voix / dame amerouse"), 260 (98, 4–5, "ki chantoit a cuer marrit"), also 105, 185, 229, 277, 293, 365 and 387; she gathers flowers, 161 (no. 56.6: "roses cueillant"), 307 (119.8–9: "chantoit, coillant la flor / un son d'amor"), 397 (no. 151, 5: "cueillant glai"); makes a garland, 183 (66.7: "fesoit chapiau de flors"), 241 (no. 87, 18: "et laisse a faire sun chapel"), 349 (no. 136, 7: "un capelh fizia"), also 380, 405.

82. Pluto's abduction of Proserpina deploys a series of terms linked to *lego*, *legere* (Ovid, *Met.* V.391–99: "... quo dum Proserpina luco / ludit et aut violas aut candida lilia *carpit*, / dumque puellari studio calathosque sinumque / inplet et aequales certat superare *legendo*, / paene simul visa est *dilectaque* raptaque Diti: / usque adeo est properatus Amor. dea territa maestro / et matrem et comites, sed matrem saepius, ore / clamat, et, ut summa vestem lanariat ab ora, / *conlecti* flores tunicis

cedere remissis.” Reference to Proserpina’s bosom (*sinus*) is distantly echoed by the idea of Purgatory as the lap where souls are gathered in, “dent’ a quel seno” (*Purg.* 7.76) and as a figure for Mary’s bosom (“vengon dal grembo di Maria,” 8.37).

83. For *delectasti* and Matelda’s song, see Peter Hawkins, “Watching Matelda,” in *The Poetics of Allusion: Vergil and Ovid in Dante’s Commedia*, ed. Rachel Jacoff and Jeffrey T. Schnapp (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1994): 181–201, esp. 197 n. 15. The implication of the word transcends Purgatory, for ultimately all the souls on the mountain are on the quest for the beloved (*Paradiso* 11.31: “lo suo diletto”; 13.111: “il nostro *Diletto*”); the command in the sphere of Jupiter to love justice (*diligite iustitiam*) is directed back toward rulers on earth.

84. Antonio Enzo Quaglio, *Il canto XXVIII del “Purgatorio”* (Florence: Le Monnier, 1966), 16–18 (“antichi fiori poetici”). Dante’s ballata “Per una ghirlandetta,” 18–19 (“le parolette mie novelle / che di fioretti fatto han ballata”), treats the poem itself as a *florilegium*. Psalm 90 includes reference to psalmody, that is, singing, just before the word that Dante cites: “Bonum est confiteri Domino et psallere nomini tuo altissime . . . mane misericordiam et veritatem tuam per nocte; in decachordo psalterio cum cantico in cithara; quia *delectasti* me Domine in factura tua et in operibus manum tuarum exultabo; quam magnificata sunt opera tua.” Both Aquinas and Bonaventure include the verse beginning with *Delectasti* in their discussion of contemplating Creation (*Contra gentiles* 2.2.4, *Itinerarium mentis ad deum* 1.15); Proverbs 8.23–31 (see note 23) concludes with the pleasure felt by Sapientia at play before God (“et *delectabar* per singulos dies, Ludens coram eo omni tempore”).

85. For the texts, see Dante Alighieri, *Rime*, ed. Gianfranco Contini (Turin: Einaudi, 1970), 115 and 118, respectively.

86. Further parallels between “Fresca rosa novella” and Dante’s text: ballata v. 4, *cantando* (*Purg.* 29.1); v. 7, *rinovelli* (33.144); v. 10, *cantine gli auselli* (28.14, “li augelletti per le cime”); v. 13, *arbuscelli* (27.134); v. 18, *angelica* (30.29, 65, 31.132, 32.33); v. 27, *fra lor le donne dea* (32.8, “quelle dee”); v. 25, *natura e costumanza* (28.66, “fuor di tutto suo costume”); on *primavera*, see note 90 below.

87. De Robertis’s view is that the dedication to Dante reflects *ex post facto* the mentions of Guido in the *Vita nuova*. Cassata in Cavalcanti, *Rime*, 41 hypothesizes that “Fresca rosa” was given to Dante in return for the *Fiore*. Dante’s Lia, echoing his ballata, acts as a forerunner here for pastorella / Matelda, who echoes Guido’s, as if Dante were reversing the order of Giovanna and Bice in *Vita nuova* 24.

88. For Guido’s sonnet “I’ vegno l’ giorno a tte nfinite volte,” recalling his anthologizing of Dante’s poems (line 8), see Cavalcanti, *Rime*, 191.

89. Gianfranco Contini, “Alcuni appunti su *Purgatorio* XXVII,” in *Varianti e altra linguistica: Una raccolta di saggi (1938–1968)* (Turin: Einaudi, 1970), 459–76, esp. 468.

90. In Cavalcanti, *Rime*, Cassata notes (41) that *rivera* and *primavera* are rhyming words in the anonymous canzone “Quando la primavera” and in Bonagiunta’s “Quando apar l’aulente fiore” and his *disordo* “Quando vegio la rivera”; such parallels also make a link from Eden back to Bonagiunta’s appearance in Canto 24. For Bonagiunta and his *disordo* in that episode, see Martinez, “The Pilgrim’s Answer to Bonagiunta,” 62–63.

91. Cavalcanti’s poem, De Robertis observed, offers, if the *giullari* are excepted, “l’unico sentimento amoroso della lirica dell’età di Dante e forse della nostra antica tradizione.” See “*Arcades ambo* (osservazioni sulla pastorali di Dante e del suo primo amico),” *Filologia e critica* 10 (1985): 231–38, esp. 237; Justin Steinberg further valorizes Cavalcanti’s ballata by placing it in the light of the pilgrim’s extended *contrasto* with Beatrice in *Purgatorio* 30–31. See *Accounting for Dante: Urban Readers and Writers in Late Medieval Italy* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007), 175–79.

92. Parallels listed in Barolini, *Dante’s Poets*; De Robertis, *Il libro* 233–35 and 1985: 236–38; Nievo del Sal, “Cavalcanti in Dante comico,” *Rivista di letteratura italiana* 9 (1991): 9–52, esp. 35–36; Cassata, in Cavalcanti, *Rime*, 207–9; and Steinberg, *Accounting for Dante*, 175–76. For the Eden-wide extent of references, note, at one extreme, *Purgatorio* 27.80, 86, of shepherds tending sheep with their staffs versus Guido’s ballata line 5, “con la sua verghetta pastorav’ agnelli”; at the other extreme is Dante’s use of the rare *drudo* (32.155, cf. ballata line 14); also “menalo ad esso” (33.128) and “sotto foglie Verdi e rami negri” (33.110) and Cavalcanti’s ballata, line 23.

93. On the pastorella found alone in examples of the genre, see Paden, *The Medieval Pastourelle*, 97 (no. 29, 8: "qe s'en vai sola deportan"), 111 (no. 34, 11: "seule sanz compaignon estoit"); also 224, 305, 407.

94. For Matelda's embrace as a topos of the genre; see Cavalcanti, "In un boschetto," 19–20, "merzè le chiesi solo di basciare / e d'abbracciar . . ."; compare Paden, *The Medieval Pastourelle*, 119 (no. 37, 37–39: "Lors me prist a embracier . . . qu'ele me vouloit bezier"); and 230 (no. 83.47–48: "Lors l'ai enbraissie, / en la bouche la baixai"); 313 (no. 122.8–9: "Je la pris, si l'embracait demaintent / l'acolai et la baisai . . .").

95. Among other parallels noted are the gift Matelda makes of her ardent glance (28.63: "di levar li occhi suoi mi fece dono"), which echoes the pastorella's offer of love (line 22: "disse che donato m'avea il core"). Dante adopts the repeating figure of the pastorella *sola sola* (v. 12) several times in Eden: the pilgrim's motion *lento lento* (28.5); the river *bruna bruna* (28.31); the amble of the dragon after it has torn the chariot (*vago vago*, 32.135); additional examples in Kirkham, "Purgatorio XXVIII," 414–15. Further scrutiny would reveal still more parallels, for example, line 6, ". . . di rugiada era bagnata" and Purgatorio 28.61–62 (l'erbe sono / bagnate . . .); also 31.103 (" . . . bagnato m'offerse") and use of the preterite with epithetic vowel (line 16, *audio*, and 25, *sentio*); compare Purgatorio 28.27 *uscio* and 28.101 *salio*.

96. The sole ballata ("Ballata, io vo' che tu ritruovi Amore) in the *Vita nuova* 12.10–15, follows a sonnet that begins with the formulaic opening that indelibly marks the pastorella, "Cavalcando l'altrier per un cammino," in which the narrator meets Love, but not the lady; the ballad is to be adorned with the "soave armonia" of a musical setting (its function as an ambulant message to Beatrice may also be related its form as a ballad, that is, a dance). In the *De vulgari eloquentia* Dante identifies ballads as requiring dancers (2.3.5: "ballate . . . indigent enim plausoribus"); later their nobility is rated just behind that of *canzoni*.

97. For the parallel of *Sapientia* and Matelda, see Peter Armour, "Matelda in Eden, the Teacher and the Apple," *Italian Studies* 38 (1983): 2–28. The expression of wisdom through song and dance will be manifest in the *tripudio* and "festa grande / sì del cantare" (*Par.* 12.22–23) and "doppia danza" (*Par.* 13.20) of the wise souls in the heaven of the sun (see also 10.79–81).

98. Patrizia Grimaldi Pizzorno, "Matelda's Dance and the Smile of the Poets," *Dante Studies* 112 (1994): 115–32, attempts the association of Matelda with the canzone form; the attempt founders as it ignores distinctions Dante makes at *DVE* 2.3.5, and overlooks Dante's association of Matelda with his own and with Cavalcanti's ballate. Some *pastourelles* are in the form of *ballettes*; see Paden, *The Medieval Pastourelle*, 277 (no. 107: "On dit que trop suis jone"), where the *ripresa* consists in the words of the shepherdess.

99. The ballata section of the Palatino anthology (twenty-three ballate, P 105–P 127, almost concluded by "Fresca rosa novella," P 126) includes three dialogic ballate giving voice to a *donna* (P 106, 112, 121). These are significant for Guido's pastorella and for Eden (see note 108 below). See Steinberg, *Accounting*, 66–73, for discussion of dialogic forms in the Vatican anthology.

100. Antonio da Tempo, *Summa artis rithimici vulgaris dictaminis*, ed. Richard Andrews (Bologna: Commissione per i testi di lingua, 1977), 49 (chap. 35, *De ballatis*): "Et primo notandum est quod idea appellatur ballatae quia fiunt ut plurimum gratia amoris veneri. Et aliquando in ipsis apponuntur per rithimantes verba moralia et notabilia, quod fit ad bene esse et ad probationem eius quod in sententia ipsarum dicitur. E tales ballatae cantantur atque coreizantur." As the ballata in the *Vita nuova* embodied the poet's words sent to Beatrice, Matelda herself, as a personified ballata, leads to Beatrice.

101. See Sandro Orlando, ed., *Rime due e trecentesche tratte dall'Archivio di Stato di Bologna* (Bologna: Commissione per i testi di lingua, 2005), 19 (no. 8, from Mem. 63, 1286, sem I, c. 297v): "d'un amorosa voglia / d'amar incomencay" (repeated in first *mutazione*). This "contrasto in forma di ballata," is inscribed four times in *Memoriali*, see Orlando no. 10bis (same, but without beginning) 14 (64, 1286, 113r), 17 (idem, 157r); and see Steinberg, *Accounting for Dante*, 24–27. The phrase "amorosa voglia" is found twice in the Palatino ballate, P 106, and 121 (which is the poem found in the *Memoriali*, attributed both to Ricuccio da Firenze and Albertuccio dalla Viola. For the double authorship, see D'Arco Silvio Avalle, *Ai luoghi di delizia pieni: saggio sulla lirica italiana del 13o secolo* (Milan, Ricciardi, 1977), 188–89; and Antonia Arveda, *Contrasti amorosi nella poesia italiana antica* (Rome:

Salerno, 1992), 88–93. Cavalcanti's pastorella is also found in fragmentary form in *Memoriali* 110 (Orlando no. 66, 1305 sem. I, c. 404v) as follows: "In un boschetto trovai pastorella / piu che la stella bela al meo parere . . . Per man me prese, d'amorosa voglia, / e dice che donato m'avea 'l core; / menome sot' a una frescheta foglia, / lao' e' vidi flor' do' one coluri, / e tanto gli sintia zoia e dulzuri, / che 'l deo d'amore me pareo vedere." Elision of the three middle strophes brings the shepherdess's "amorosa voglia" to the fore. Guido's pastorella craving her *drudo* ("la man mi prese d'amorosa voglia / mi disse che mi avea donato il core") is in this sense a generic formula; but see also Orlando *Rime* p. 36–37, no. 21, "Si me destrençe l'amorosa volglà," a sonnet.

102. For these poems in the Laurentian anthology (L 011–015), see *Concordanza della lingua poetica italiana delle origini*, ed. D'Arco Silvio Avalle (Milan: Ricciardi, 1992), 114–17. The *laude* are distinguished by being designated as by "Frate Guittone," except the last, which is by "Frate G."; compositions preceding and following are attributed to "F G" or "F. Guittone," a distinction that reflects the fact that the ballate begin (and constitute) a distinct quaternion. See Lino Leonardi, "Il canzoniere Laurenziano: Struttura, contenuti e fonti di una raccolta d'autore," in *I canzonieri della lirica italiana delle origini*, ed. Lino Leonardi (Florence: SISMEL-Edizioni del Galluzzo, 2001), 4:153–214, esp. 175–79. The ballad "Vegna vegna" appears to derive from a secular ballad ("Seguramente") recorded twice in the *Memoriali*. See Orlando, *Memoriali*, nos. 21 and 50 (37–38, 75–76), and, for the tension between sacred and secular ballads in the *Memoriali*, Steinberg, *Accounting for Dante*, 21, 33–34.

103. Paden, *The Medieval Pastourelle*, includes sacred *pastourelles* of several kinds: in no. 41 (p. 125), by Gautier de Coinci, the subject is overtly the love of Mary (rather than Marot, or Mariette); sometimes the vernacular lines alternate with familiar hymn incipits from the liturgy, both to parody the liturgy with an erotic song (as in no. 22.A, 46–47 [pp. 77–81]: "joyr d'amor luy apris / *beata nobis gaudia*") or to make a sacred parody of the *pastourelle*, as in no. 68.36–37 (p. 188), where the lady found in the pleasance is the Virgin ("la mere Dieu ilec trouvoy, / *jam lucis orto sidere*").

104. The Palatino and Laurentian anthologies include sonnets, ballate, and canzoni in which recursive elements of ballate (*volte*), as well as the tercets of sonnets and the *tomate* of *canzoni* are identified as versicles (in the Palatino) or responsory verses (in the Laurentian), using the abbreviatory symbols (V for *versus* or *versiculus* and R for *responsorium*) as conventionally done in liturgical manuscripts. See D'Arco Silvio Avalle, "Compendi liturgici in testi lirici profani del XIII secolo," *Medioevo e Rinascimento*, n.s., 2 (1994): 138–42; summarized in *CLPIO*, clx–clxi.

105. See William Paden, *Medieval Pastourelle*, I, 51 (Walter of Chatillon 12.45–47: "et sub fronde tenera . . . subici compellitur"); also 53, 91 (Gavaudan 27. 11: "assec me a l'ombra d'un telh"); II, 395 (Anonymous 150.3: "delez l'unbre d'un boschet"); 407, 415 (Joan Esteve 163.86, "intrem no.n sotz un arborelh").

106. Gazing at the Gryphon–Christ substitutes for and transcends the final vision in Cavalcanti's poem, line 28: "Tanto vi sentia gioia e dolzore / che 'l dio d'amore—mi pareo vedere." It is to behold the sight of the Gryphon that the pilgrim's eyes are drawn to Beatrice's eyes by the virtues ("merrenti a li occhi suoi") [*Purg.* 31.109].

107. That Beatrice thinks of herself as, when alive, having steered the pilgrim ("meco il menava in dritta parte volto") [*Purg.* 30.123]; "ti menavano ad amar lo bene" [31.23]) is part of the same pattern.

108. This set of parallels between Dante's Eden and Guido's poem has to my knowledge not been observed. Proserpina's Enna is also shaded: "Silva coronat aquas cingens latus omne suisque / *frondibus ut velo Phoebo*s submovet ictus" (Ovid, *Met.* 5.388–89). John of Garland's model bucolic poem has Phyllis embraced by her lover under leafy cover (Paden, *The Medieval Pastourelle*, 121, no. 39.44: "frondoso thalamo Phillida *tectus* amo").

109. Cassata in Cavalcanti 43 notes that "fresqu' e novella" describes the shepherdess in Gui d'Ussel's *pastorella* (see in Paden, *The Medieval Pastourelle*, I, 62 [18.6]).

110. Peter Lombard, commentary on Psalm 31: "In baptismo enim deletur originale peccatum: non ut non sit, sed ut peccatum ultra non sit. Ideoque congrue dicit; *Beati quorum remissae sunt iniquitates*, id est, mitigatae per gratiam, ut non regnent in mortali corpore (Rom. VI). Cujus rei causa est, quod in baptismo tecta sunt peccata. Unde subdit, *et quorum peccata*, scilicet originalia, et si qua sunt actualia, *tecta sunt*, [Aug.] id est, cooperta et abolita. Si enim Deus texit peccata, noluit advertere.

Si noluit advertere, noluit animadvertere, id est punire; noluit agnoscere, sed ignoscere. Non ergo dicit tecta peccata, tanquam ibi sint et vivant, sed ita deleta ut Deus non videat, id est puniat aeternaliter. Videre enim Dei est peccata punire." Unde alibi: *Averte faciem tuam a peccatis meis* (Psal. L). Et dicitur hoc a simili. [Gl. int.] Ita enim teguntur peccata in baptismo, sicut Aegyptii insequentes Israel, tecti sunt in mari Rubro" (PL 190, 317D–318B).

111. Kirkham ("Purgatorio XXVIII," 419) cites Augustine's idea of the garden as "locum . . . amoenissimum fructuosis nemoribus opacatum" (*De genesi ad litteram* 8.1, PL 34.373).

112. See Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 5.294–678, for Calliope's tale, alluded to at *Purgatorio* 1.9–12.

113. Paden, *The Medieval Pastourelle*, 146–48 (*Carmina burana* 46.32, 47.11; 49.5), 157 (no. 54.13), also 145, 169, 211, 219, 297, 305, 313 (no. 122.11: "li gieu d'amor li vueil faire"), 367.

114. See Vasoli, *Opere minori* 1/2, 272, and Gorni, "Il nome di Beatrice," in *Lettera nome numero: L'ordine delle cose in Dante*, 34, who observes that this parallel "evidenzia a questo punto la potenziale interscambiabilità del nome di Beatrice con quello stesso di Amore" (and refers to *Vita nuova* 24.5). The relevance of Psalm 84.9 ("Audiam quid loquitur in mente Deus") persists.

115. The Vulgate reading is *voglie* (rather than *doglie*, less well attested but preferred by Petrocchi); Gorni ("La nuova legge del *Purgatorio*," 215–16) argues strongly for *voglie*; Baldelli ("Linguistica e interpretazione," 540) and Muresu ("L'inno e il canto d'amore," 228–29) revert to *doglie*. Along with other arguments, Dante's use of *doglie* at *Purgatorio* 4.1 seems to render *voglie* both preferable and more probable at 2.108.

116. See also *Convivio* 2.15.4. Endowing Beatrice with the persuasions (smile) of Philosophy prepares her prophetic and visionary discourses in Cantos 32–33, as the disclosure of her eyes, her first beauty, prepared her mediation of the image of Christ in the Gryphon at 31.109–26.

117. For this terminology, see Orosius, *Historia adversus paganos* 6.20: "Porro autem hunc esse eundem diem, hoc est, octavum idus Januariarum, quo nos Epiphania, hoc est, apparitionem, sive manifestationem Dominici sacramenti observamus, nemo credentium, sive etiam fidei contradicentium, nescit."; and Durandus 6.16.1: "Sequitur festum Epiphaniae, quod vocabulum grecum sonat latine manifestatio sive apparitio. . . ." For the Epiphany liturgy in the *Vita nuova*, see Martinez, "The Poetics of Advent Liturgies," 281–84.

118. For Beatrice and Epiphany in the *Vita nuova*, see *ibid.*

119. Barolini (*Dante's Poets*, 152–53) argues that the anthology of Guido's ballate in Eden remains a qualified exaltation and that Guido remains merely the forerunner to Dante's greater task of writing the *Commedia* and sees Cavalcanti's demotion to his "naturalistic paradise" in relation to Virgil's exclusion. For Dante's complex and ambivalent lifelong relation to Guido and Guido's memory, see now Robert M. Durling, "'Mio figlio ov' è?' (*Inferno* X, 60)," in *Dante: Da Firenze all'aldilà. Atti del terzo seminario dantesco internazionale (Firenze, 9–11 giugno 2000)*, ed. Michelangelo Picone (Florence: Cesati, 2001), 303–29.

120. *Monarchia* 3.16.7; in this regard see Quaglio, *Il canto XXVIII del "Purgatorio,"* 10–12 and Dronke, "Dante's Earthly Paradise," 475–78.

121. See *Convivio* 2.15.5, speaking of doubts that "caggiono, quaso come nebullette matutine a la faccia del sole. . . ." Compare also *Monarchia* 2.1.5, of natural Love: "Ut sol estivus qui disiectis nebulis matutinis oriens luculenter irradiat. . . ."

122. See Durandus, *Rationale* 6.67.6, 9, and 11: "Illi namque ferentes ramos triumphum Christi nondum completum sed tempore passionis complendum prefigurabant. . . . Ecclesia vero per talia representat triumphum Christi iam completum. . . . Quia ergo non solum ipse triumphator est, sed etiam, per ipsius gratiam et sanctificationem triumphabunt omnes electi." See also Kantorowicz, "The Lord's Advent," 41–43, 56–58.

Dante's Poetics of Births and Foundations

GIUSEPPE MAZZOTTA

Throughout the *Divine Comedy* there runs a motif centered on the metaphor of birth and its political extension, foundation. The poem deploys fully this thematic pattern and elevates it to its primary conceptual framework. It unveils “birthing” (by which I mean the individual event of being born, the foundation of a city, the conception of poetry, etc.) as the radical perspective that penetrates, beyond all habits of thought, right to the roots of historical experiences. Textual examples of this thematic web abound, and I will first list some of them. I will then probe some of the implications of the question of birth as both origin and foundation, what could be called the physics and metaphysics of birth.

At the beginning of the poem, Virgil, who will be acknowledged by the pilgrim variously as father and as “source” of his poetic eloquence, states, “Nacqui *sub Julio*” (*Inf.* 1.70). Francesca echoes the detail: “Siede la terra dove nata fui . . .” (*Inf.* 5.97). Ciacco refers to his death in terms of the pilgrim’s own birth: “Tu fosti, prima ch’io disfatto, fatto” (*Inf.* 6.42). Farinata, for whom Florence is endangered by his own aristocratic virtues and whose role exemplifies the rift between ethics and politics, describes Dante, and indirectly himself as “di quella nobil patria natio” (*Inf.* 10.26). Guido da Montefeltro, while relating the changes in his oral life, speaks of the “forma . . . d’ossa e di polpe / che la madre mi diè” (*Inf.* 27.73–74).

The list of this recurrent figure is by no means limited to the *Inferno*. Think of the epitaph Pia de’ Tolomei inscribes for herself: “Siena mi fè, disfecemi Maremma” (*Purg.* 5.134)—a line that picks up and reverses Ciacco’s self-definition. We might mention Sordello, who in greeting

Virgil, breaks off what most likely was meant to echo Virgil's epitaph, "Mantua me genuit. . . ." (cf. *Purg.* 6.72). The references to the Annunciation, to Statius's birth in Toulouse, to St. Francis's birth in Assisi and St. Dominic's in Calaroga (*Par.* 11.43–54 and 12.52–55, respectively) are well known. Cacciaguida's account of his own and other great Florentine family roots, ranging from his first address to Dante, "O sanguis meus" (*Par.* 15.28), through his allusions to the dynastic stocks of some Florentines (*Par.* 16) to his recognition by the pilgrim as "O cara piota mia" (*Par.* 17.13) and Dante's own horoscope, whereby the planetary arrangement signals the singularity of his birth (*Par.* 22.112–17), stresses the importance of the metaphor for the pilgrim's own history. Finally, at the end of the poem, the prayer to the Virgin Mary, daughter of her son, comes to a focus on the most intimate receptacle of her body: the womb of Mary as the flowerpot where "è germinato questo fiore" (*Par.* 33.9). The verb *germinare*, derived from *germen* (spore or semen), describes the receptacle where the germinal cell of redemption was deposited. The seminal causes of Neoplatonism are here embodied.

The prayer to Mary, with its emphasis on the double, reciprocal conception of mother and son, plainly reenacts the centrality of the Nativity event in Dante's poetry and theology. In this sense, it acknowledges Christianity as the religion making birth (and rebirth or the resurrection) the heart of its being. In the other cases, the reference to birth may function as a principle of individuation, an index of a character's identity, social standing, and origin. A birth, in its distinctive corporeality, always evokes a material fact of history: the specifics of place and time, both of which are neither directly known nor willed by the figures involved. But as a physical fact, it always marks a beginning and an "event," a concrete point of departure toward an as yet not existing future, even when a life ends up achieving nothing and folds back into nothing. As far as the lives of the "founders" celebrated in *Paradiso* go—Francis, Dominic, Benedict, and Bernard—births turn into unpredictable historical events, actions breaking the chain of natural causality, bearing and giving origin to unintended consequences that touch other lives. We could provisionally generalize by saying that in a birth Dante catches the process by which nature becomes history, a fact turns into a metaphor, and ordinary occurrences take on the color of significant actions. For every birth combines a paradoxically commonplace singularity and familiar everydayness. Adam, who is called "l'uom che non nacque" (*Par.* 7.26), is an exception. But the rest

of us share the fact of being born. Yet each birth is unique. In this sense, a birth represents a break with the past, changes it (and thus it reverses the view that the past alone conditions the present), and forces on us the thought of a possible new beginning as well as the anticipation of one's mortality.

This concern with birthing goes beyond the biological happening and biographical descriptions. It even figures outside the *Divine Comedy*. In *Purgatorio* 25, through a lecture on medieval embryology, Statius (and we shall see why it is significant that it should be he) recounts the origin of the soul and its powers by charting the processes of refinement of the blood, the conjunction with the sperm, and the coagulation of the blood into a fetus in the mother's body. Further, metaphorical births describe cities' origins and foundations. After some discreet references to Semiramis and Dido as founders (cf. *Inf.* 5), Virgil recalls his birthplace in Mantua at *Inferno* 29.56 ("dove nacqu'io"). The recall ushers in the revised tale of the foundation of his city—the "originar de la mia terra" (98) on the swamps around Lake Benaco on the Mencius river (74–78). The foundation of Rome, on the other hand, is often cited, as, for instance, in *Inferno* 26, where Virgil, pointing out the shades of Ulysses and Diomedes, calls the fall of Troy the catastrophe from which the "gentil seme" (60) of the Romans develops. Florence's origin from Fiesole and from Rome ("la nobilissima figlia di Roma") is also recorded.

Because Dante links together births, seeds, origins, and foundations with Roman poets (Virgil and Statius) and Roman history (as opposed to the Greek myth embodied by Oedipus, Ulysses, and Diomedes), one cannot but ask what is Dante's sense of history's origin or—which roughly amounts to the same thing—what precise understanding of birth, origins, and foundations does Dante inherit from the classical Roman tradition. To be sure, he never refers to Rome's engagement with its own beginnings as is displayed by its civic ritual: to this day it celebrates its *dies natalis* on April 21. As medieval numismatics attest, the ancient formula SPQR accompanies the image of the she-wolf nursing the twins Romulus and Remus. But doubtless he knows that the question of birth and foundation lies at the heart of Rome's own self-understanding and questing for a new kind of history. A couple of examples will suffice.

Livy chronicles the history of Rome not with an abstract, transcendent chronology or with a myth of sacred origin (such as one finds in Bede and Peter Comestor) but with the concrete foundation of the city, *Ab urbe*

condita. The *Aeneid* retrieves the myth of the city's origin by the narrative of Aeneas, who has first suffered the loss of Troy. Unlike Ulysses, whose contrivance of the wooden horse destroys Troy, Aeneas builds one city after the other along the stages of his journeying and watches Dido's edification of Carthage on the symbolic ashes of Troy. An extension of this classical, pagan preoccupation with foundations is available in the *City of God*. Augustine, who, in this sense, is the greatest Roman philosopher, finds the wellspring of the church in the Roman ideology of foundations and binds it to the Jewish account of Creation. For the tradition stretching from Aeneas to Augustine foundations entail primarily the experience of the will and the thought of the future (since the will is powerless toward the past).

The web of political births and foundations described above is a far cry from both the *Convivio*, where the link between birth and nobility is pondered, and from the *Vita nuova*, which posits a double riddle of birth and origination, the birth of poetry and of love. The *Vita nuova* places us from the start within the horizon of time, time in the subjective dimension of memory. The text literally begins at the beginning: "In quella parte del libro de la mia memoria, dinanzi a la quale poco si potrebbe leggere, si trova una rubrica la quale dice: *Incipit vita nova*. The poet will reproduce memory's inscriptions, but throughout he records what he views as the spontaneous origin of his poetry (chapter 19); he acknowledges his descent from Guinizzelli as his poetic father; and at the end of the book he finds out the singularity of poetry within the pattern of origins: the work of art gives origin to the poet as much as the work originates from him. Above all, he solves the double riddle shaping his text: he discovers that his poetry is rooted in the heart of love, which nourishes the lover, and that what makes things new, what imparts a new beginning to one's life, is love.

This topic of births and beginnings has received little or no attention from scholars (Singleton, Charity, Freccero, Harrison), who, by and large, have chosen to highlight the structure of retrospection, the typology of death, and the perspective of the end (in their Augustinian, Hegelian, and Heideggerian articulations) as the principle of Dante's representation of the afterlife. As Augustine has it (*Confessions* 11.28), a man's life is extended in two directions, toward memory and toward the future, and it becomes intelligible when it has passed into memory. By the same

token, so it is argued, Dante's focus on death freezes life into an unalterable, forever fixed totality. When we die, time is suspended and death reduces us to frozen appearances. Only then do we finally become what we are and, in retrospect, the ultimate meaning of our lives surfaces.

Such an understanding of the revelatory, foundational power of death logically depends on the temporal priority of birth. It says nothing about the fact that the meaning of a life, although it is revealed at the end, is implicit in its origin. Nor does this understanding tackle the textual detail that Augustine's reflection on memory's inner spaces occurs in the context of his exegesis of Genesis's "In the beginning" (*Confessions* 12.9). In his theology of beginnings, biblical creation—as much as the Roman practice of political foundations for Livy and Virgil—offers the open-ended conditions both to imagine the future out of some dead past and to anticipate all possible actions in the world. Indeed, because a birth in its uniqueness presupposes a singular responsibility and obligation, Augustine ties birth with the emergence of a historical action and choice. For Dante, birth and death (though different from each other in that in a physical death all is done) belong together as sacramental gifts implicating and enveloping each other: he submits to death's sovereignty as far as it brings in not an end, since there is no end, but a new beginning. How some of these issues here raised are clustered together emerges from Virgil's autobiographical self-portrait in *Inferno* 1:

Rispuosemi: "Non omo, omo già fui,
e li parenti miei furon lombardi,
mantoani per patria ambedui.

Nacqui *sub Iulio*, ancor che fosse tardi,
e vissi a Roma sotto 'l buon Augusto
nel tempo de li dèi falsi e bugiardi.

Poeta fui, e cantai di quel giusto
figliuol d'Anchise che venne di Troia,
poi che 'l superbo Ilión fu combusto."

(67–75)

The verses collapse the distinction between biography and history and frame the map historical circumstances and roots of Virgil's family background and the place and time of his birth. They also imaginatively connect his birth, his parents, and the birth of Aeneas, which in turn tells the line of Caesar's genealogy. In fact, the burden of the passage rests on

Virgil's self-identity and origination. In biblical narrative, genealogy (the dynastic line of, say, the prophet Samuel or the generation of Jesus, from Abraham through David to his birth in Judea, in Matthew's prologue) records lines of descent as a tool to vindicate the legitimacy of the claims made on behalf of the respectively prophetic and messianic voices. In Virgil's self-identification, genealogy celebrates the sacredness of tradition, the Roman cult of the ancients and reverence for the authority of the past while exposing the thread binding one figure to another (Virgil, Aeneas, Caesar, Augustus, Rome, and the *Aeneid*). The peculiarity of each birth consists in this: a birth is not really our own or of our choosing any more than are one's parents or time; nor is a figure its own foundation. As a point of origin, a birth as a raw, biological fact sends us back to previous origins; but out of this regression into the past springs the idea of the future. As Rome does with Troy, each historical figure encompasses within itself the seeds of the past and of the future realities it generates. In this sense, each birth uniquely embodies a project for the future and thus breaks the molds of the past (as, say, Bonconte does with his father Guido da Montefeltro or Francis does with his merchant father).

We would be in error, therefore, if we saw in Dante's insistence on births and foundations merely the vestiges of a longing for recapturing pure, lost origins. In Dante's thought there is no nostalgia for an archaic mythic order (not even in his encounter with Cacciaguida and their musings on Florence's genealogy). If anything, origins necessarily entail the future. For example, the theory of language in *De vulgari eloquentia*, which gets going out of the dream of the lost Edenic language, acknowledges history's unfolding as the locus of permutations, differences, and linguistic scraps to be forged in a language of the future not yet engendered. A second example concerns politics.

I have been arguing that every birth birth is significant because it alters the web of existing relations and changes each of us into potentially historical agents capable of willing and shaping both the past (though in fact the past makes the will powerless) and the future. It follows that there is a politics of beginnings, the conviction of a willful act and choice to be realized and made. Virgil, who is thoroughly steeped in history as genealogy, envisions the future as a new historical beginning. After identifying himself when he appears to the lost pilgrim, he predicts the imminent cleansing of the world's greed by the action of the "Veltro," whose "nazion sarà tra feltro e feltro" (*Inf.* 1.105). The enigmatic prophecy, which

stresses once again Virgil's sense of the bond between birth and history, discloses the inner connection between new beginnings and the future: it suggests that the possibility of the future presumes the idea of a beginning and vice versa.

Nowhere else does the poem explore the implications of this temporal dimension of birth as in *Purgatorio*. The canticle begins at dawn on Easter Sunday, the liturgical time of the Resurrection, or new creation, but the new beginning for the souls cannot be construed as a second chance. Their purification, to the contrary, means that they bring to completion the spiritual renewal started on earth. At any rate, as the process of renewal is thematized throughout the canticle: time is uncovered in its future dimension. The poet announces his poetic argument by adopting the future tense: "e canterò di quel secondo regno / dove l'umano spirito si purga / e di salire al ciel diventa degno" (*Purg.* 1.4–6). In Hell the souls live in the fixed circle of immanent time. By contrast, the first soul we meet in *Purgatorio*, Cato, is poised between past and future, and in his juridical role he forces the penitents to resist the lure of the past and look instead toward the future.

Cato comes into view after the reader has caught sight of Caesar's murderers, Brutus and Cassius, in the mouths of Lucifer. In *Purgatorio* 1 he watches over the edicts of this new spiritual order and appears later as an ethical voice censuring the pilgrim's esthetic self-absorption as he listens to Casella's song, just as a little earlier Cato had resisted the temptations of Marcia's memory. The rejection of the ghosts of the past entails the view of time as future and introduces a notion that underlies the deepest question of beginnings: freedom.

That the primary ethical implication of beginnings and foundations is freedom (for the very notion of beginning is inconceivable without an idea of freedom, just as freedom is inconceivable without the notion of beginning) emerges from the figuration of Cato's suicide as an act of and a quest for freedom: "Libertà va cercando, ch'è sì cara, / come sa chi per lei vita rifiuta" (*Purg.* 1.71–72). Cato sought a political-moral freedom from the tyranny of Caesar and Pompey and, more generally, from the tyranny of the civil war, which in Lucan's *Pharsalia* encapsulated the monotonously tragic paradigm of Roman history, the dark side of its imperial claims. Dante subsumes Cato's (and his own) liberty within a theology of freedom, and yet he preserves the autonomy that political and secular values warrant. In *Purgatorio*, as the penitents prepare for their

moral ascent, they hear the opening words of Psalm 113, “In exitu Israel de Aegypto” (2.46), the song of the Jews’ freedom from the house of bondage in Egypt. Here, theology is politics and politics is theology, and the two traditions (Roman and Jewish) constituting the grid of Dante’s moral imagination shed a revealing light on each other as well as on the representation of Statius.

Statius’s appearance in *Purgatorio* is introduced by the Nativity morning song, “*Gloria in excelsis . . . Deo*” (20.136), which echoes Luke 2:9. The motif is followed by a direct reference to Luke’s account of the apparition of the risen Christ at Emmaus (*Purg.* 21.7–10; cf. Luke 24:13 ff.). The Christological background prepares the further story of Statius’s conversion in reaction to the emperor Domitian’s persecution of Christians (*Purg.* 22.82–87). The process of his conversion is told through Statius’s poetic apprenticeship (as if writing were an ascetic labor of the soul), through his reading of Virgil’s *Eclogues* and *Aeneid* to his writing about the “double sorrow” of Jocasta, namely, the *Thebaid*, a task that is figured as a journey. As in the case of Cato, here too political-moral liberty stands at the forefront of Dante’s concerns: he confronts and redefines the insights of the two Roman poets, Lucan and Statius.

Historically, roughly fifty years separate Statius from Lucan. (Statius composes in his *Silvae* (2.7) a “Genethliacon Lucani.”) In fact, they both live and write at a time of great crisis in the history of Rome, and both recount the bankruptcy of freedom. Lucan, who against Nero’s Caesarism casts himself as the witness of events he narrates, focuses on the civil war between Caesar and Pompey as the battle not of two opposed visions but of the same passion for power. The antagonists are a pair of mirrors reflecting each other. Together, they bring about the catastrophe of the Roman Republic. Between them stands Cato, and Lucan shows how the curtain falls on this last incarnation of Stoic virtues. For Cato Rome’s name is *libertas* (*Pharsalia* 2.301ff.). The poem, however, achieves more than that. Written between 59 and 65 AD, the *Pharsalia* comes through as a compendium of Roman history, and Roman history unfolds as an unchanging, fatal concatenation of civil wars (between Marius and Sulla, Caesar and Pompey, and Octavian and Antony). The scandal of the civil war is for Lucan an insoluble enigma shadowing all rationality, and his history-writing, which bypasses and questions Virgil’s resolution. Virgil himself focuses on the “civil war” between Turnus and Aeneas (who by coming to Latium is in a sense returning to the place of his ancestors).

Against the specter of the civil war he retrieves Rome's foundational myths. Over and against Virgil, Lucan seeks to leave out the traditional mythical machinery of the epic in favor of a realistic, historical narrative, and he sinks into a world of hallucinations and madness: reality is indistinguishable from diabolical magic operations.

The myths of Thebes and the events and characters of Statius's *Thebaid* so litter the world of *Inferno* (cf., for instance, the references to the Furies, Capaneus, Jason's betrayal of Hypsipile, Eteocles and Polynice, Pisa, a "novella Tebe" in *Inferno* 33, etc.) that Thebes can be envisaged as the radical emblem of the fallen earthly city. Conceived in conversation with Lucan's poem, the *Thebaid* dispels from the start the illusion of a rational understanding and exorcism of Thebes' mythical history. The night of madness hangs forever over the house of Oedipus and Jocasta. Statius keeps repeating the ancient myth's truth: the serpents of the Furies—madness of power, lust for revenge, monster of pride, the nightmare of fratricidal wars, and so forth—are always again ready to be unleashed. If Lucan spins out the interplay between history and literature (in the intuitive recognition that political life finds its best lookalike in fiction), Statius plunges us into the dark fantasies engulfing historical existence: politics comes through as psychology and, as such, it unveils the fatality we know but cannot change—the steady human transgression of divine laws.

The insight into history as a phantasmatic, mythical repetition organizes the narrative of the *Thebaid*. Quite at odds with this insight, Statius, who at the start describes his own mind beclouded by madness, casts writing as the undertaking of a solitary journey ("whence, heavenly ones, am I to take the road?" [*Theb.* 1.3–4]). This metaphor of poetry as a journey or spiritual adventure, which Dante picks up in the representation of Statius, gets going in the shadow of both Lucan (1.16 ff.) and Virgil, who is celebrated as the "magnus magister" (12.810 ff.). Through the references to the Roman literary tradition Statius self-consciously inscribes himself in that tradition. The awareness of the singularity of his poetry, however, counters the repetitive thematic pattern of the poem. As will be shown, Dante exploits this complication in Statius's poetic self-consciousness.

After a nod in the direction of Rome's political theology, the "divina domus" of the Flavii and of Domitian as "dominus et deus," the poet descends into the mind of Oedipus, who has plucked his eyes to punish

his guilty shame. Oedipus is blind, and his blindness appears at the opening of the text as he curses his sons, Eteocles and Polynices, who were conceived in his mother's bed. In Virgil the fact of birth—as, for example, in the Fourth Eclogue—is a cause for celebration. In the *Thebaid*, the birth of Eteocles and Polynices is a tragic event, for they repeat the old curse, and, by being born, they introduce nothing new in history. They will destroy each other, and this thematic kernel reproduces itself in an endless series of variations to confirm the hold of the past on them. Accordingly, Statius presents the vicissitudes of his tale through a “baroque” rhetoric in which the language ceaselessly turns inward, curves in sinuous dead-ends; like the incestuous plot it makes its subject matter and excludes all alternatives.

In *Purgatorio* Dante deliberately erases or reinterprets the literal traces of both the *Pharsalia* and the *Thebaid*. Yet these two epics of the Roman civil wars constitute the preamble to Dante's own representation of the Florentine civil wars. On Florence's political stage we watch the hallucinatory spectacle of empty bodies, “persone” (cf. *Inf.* 6.36), a word etymologically denoting both the language of histrionics, the actors' empty masks through which sounds are emitted, and, ironically, the substantiality of what theological discourse understands as “persons.” A look at the canto of punished gluttony (“la dannosa colpa de la gola” [*Inf.* 6.53]) will show Dante's understanding of naturalistic history, of a politics of bodies. He filters such an understanding through Epicurean philosophy, classical political theories, and the city's idolatry of power.

Here Dante meets Ciacco, a shade who explains his death in terms of Dante's birth: “Tu fosti, prima ch'io disfatto, fatto” (6.42). From his perspective, life comes forth for everybody as a natural cycle of deaths and births, although, for all their temporal proximity, the two happenings remain unrelated. For Ciacco these two facts scan the biological succession/continuity in the city. To emphasize the naturalistic burden of the canto, Dante frames it with a reference to the Resurrection, the event radically transfiguring the biological conception of bodies (*Inf.* 6.94–111), but without any effect on Ciacco's condition. In effect, Ciacco casts himself as an outsider in the city's values and power play, as one who, driven from the social fabric, claims no history and no redemption for himself. From his viewpoint, however, his gluttony pales in relation to what he perceives as the real voraciousness and gluttony of the body politic.

Ciacco's name means "pig." From the standpoint of the citizens to whom he refers in his speech ("Voi cittadini mi chiamaste Ciacco," 6.52: "You citizens called me Ciacco"), he has violated the city's image of decorum and purity and is thus banished from it. The presiding figure of the canto is Cerberus, the three-mouthed dog flaying the empty shades. To the pilgrim who inquires about the future of their divided city ("la città partita," 6.61), Ciacco predicts the violence of an imminent blood bath. The sense of the prophecy is specific: over the years, from 1300 to 1302, the Whites and Blacks will destroy each other until Boniface VIII, with the help of Charles of Valois, will bring about the defeat of the Whites.

In pulling together politics and gluttony and in deploying gluttony as a mirror for the realm of human affairs, Dante argues that Florentine local politics is a politics of bodies, rooted in the blind desires of bodies, and these desires are symbolized by the materiality of food, its ingestion and elimination. The central conceit binding the two themes of the narrative, the bloated body of the gluttons and the sick body politic of the city, derives from the classical fable of Menenius Agrippa as told by Livy in his *Ab urbe condita* (2.32). To heal the dissension between patricians and plebeians, Menenius draws an analogy between the food, the belly, and the corporate structure of the state. Livy's parable aims at the harmony of the city by arguing that an organic corporate model underlies the structure of the city. The belly gives back to each part of the body what it needs and divides among the veins of the body the blood fashioned by digesting the food. By virtue of the analogy, the city's order depends on the organic interdependence of all its parts.

But Dante does not believe in the validity of the corporate political analogy. The belly takes in everything endlessly. And he sees neither a way out of this contingent hell of political hatreds nor a possible cohesion in his native city. Minds—a word that ironically and contrapuntally recurs with high frequency in the space where the body's sovereignty is both celebrated and damned—are divided from bodies and are split within themselves. The anatomy of the body, hideously dismembered and diligently itemized, litters the canto: "gole," "occhi," "barba," "ventre," "unghiate . . . mani," "bocche," "sanne," "spanne," "canne," "facce," "gola," "sangue," "fronti," "cuori," "occhi," "carne," "figura." The body parts mock any effort to reconstitute them into a harmonious whole. The very heart of the city is ruled by injustice:

“Ciaccio, il tuo affanno
mi pesa sì, ch’a lagrimar mi ’nvita;
ma dimmi, se tu sai, a che verranno
li cittadini de la città partita;
s’alcun v’è giusto; e dimmi la cagione
per che l’ha tanta discordia assalita.”

E quelli a me: “Dopo lunga tencione
verranno al sangue, e la parte selvaggia
cacerà l’altra con molta offensione.

Poi appresso convien che questa caggia
infra tre soli, e che l’altra sormonti
con la forza di tal che testé piaggia.

Alte terrà lungo tempo le fronti,
tenendo l’altra sotto gravi pesi,
come che di ciò pianga o che n’aonti.

Giusti son due, e non vi sono intesi;
superbia, invidia e avarizia sono
le tre faville c’hanno i cuori accesi.”

(*Inf.* 6.58–75)

Discordia, etymologically, evokes the dissonance of the heart, the receptacle where the condensation of evil gathers. Ciaccio’s description of the moral disease infesting Florence echoes Augustine’s view of the earthly city, “divided against itself by litigations, by wars, by battles” (*City of God* 15.4). Its founder was Cain, a fratricide, who, “overcome by envy . . . slew his own brother” (15.5). We are bound to overhear in the description an allusion to Rome’s foundation in Romulus’s murder of Remus.

This perspective on current Florentine history belongs to Ciaccio, who sheds a lurid, surreal light on the city’s going from war to war. The factions, he says, “verranno al sangue.” The phrase literally refers to the bloodshed caused by one of the party of the Cerchi family. But in the mind of Ciaccio, who thus views his own gluttony as a lesser of two evils, there glowers a hallucination enveloping the savages of either party: a taste for blood, a hemorrhage of violence in which they tear each other to pieces and which constitutes a literal political vampirism. The horrific scene (made of reticent allusions, as if to both suggest and elude any possible literalism) is prefigured by Cerberus’s cannibalization of the shades/corpses and ingestion of waste. The civil war as self-cannibalizing gives a glimpse of the sinister foul face of gluttony: in the reciprocity of violence trapping the bloodthirsty sinners there is no sacramental bread they break and share nor is there a cup they bless.

This sort of politics as desecration arouses disgust in the pilgrim—as if he has gazed at the leftovers of a macabre meal. But the canto does not stop here; it unfolds by highlighting both the esthetics and the philosophical assumptions of gluttony. *Gula*, we are told by Thomas Aquinas, concerns the pleasures of touch and taste, the “*judicium saporum*,” the “*gustus*,” as well as the inordinate pleasure in food and drink (*Quaestiones Disputatae disputatae de Malomalo*, XIII, art. 3, resp. 4). Going beyond Aquinas, Dante focuses on the privy, as it were, on the private other side of the rituals of the gourmet who now sits in his own excrements and whose food turns into waste he will most likely consume. The glamour and excesses of refined pleasures have altogether vanished as we witness the melancholy spectacle of its disagreeableness: the stench of the earth drenched by foul rain, the mud, and Cerberus eating it. Words denoting the subtleties of the palate punctuate the text: on the one hand, we find the adjective “*dolce*”—used twice (*Inf.* 6.84, 88), to designate the sweet quality of taste, and, on the other hand, “*attosca*” (84) and “*spiacente*” (48). Their contrast conveys, first, the discrepancy between the lure and consequences of the sin.

There are also other implications about a politics of taste. If Ciaccio fancied himself an esthete (he was probably a court buffoon, a banker, or an actor), cultivating in his “serene life” the pleasures of the body and food and loathing the city’s wolfish appetites, he bears now no resemblance to the two mildly Goliardic poets and gluttons of Dante’s youth, Forese Donati and Bonagiunta da Lucca, who in *Purgatorio* are enchanted by the inner sweetness of style and tongue. If anything, Ciaccio has literalized the impulses of the Goliards’ drinking bouts and belly worship. Through his esthetic deformation Dante gauges the “place” pleasure occupies in the economy of the city. Two strains of classical philosophy are discreetly evoked for the city’s decay: Cynicism and the vulgar version of Epicureanism. The Cynics, says Augustine, are “canine philosophers” (*City of God* 14). Isidore of Seville, in his wake, calls them “dogs in the street,” who blur the boundaries between private and public morality and who in their “filth of impudence” violate all public decency (*Etymologies* 8.14). At the same time, gluttons are called “hogs of Epicurus,” distinct from the Epicurean philosophers, such as Epicurus himself, who deny the immortality of the soul. To the gluttons, knowledge is mere taste and, as the verb *savere* (*Inf.* 6.83) shows, they make the palate their organ of

knowledge, thereby reducing philosophy to a question of elegant savoring.

This prophetic-political rhetoric binding the canto echoes the accounts of two contemporary Florentine chroniclers, Dino Compagni and Giovanni Villani. Dino Compagni comments on the mimetic rivalry of the factions: “La città, retta con poca giustizia, cadde in nuovo pericolo, perché i cittadini si cominciarono a dividere per gara di uffici, abominando l’un l’altro” (*Cronaca* 1.20). And Giovanni Villani, using the same words as Ciacco (and, later, Brunetto Latini), attributes to pride, envy, and avarice the cause of the city’s discord (*Cronica* 8.68–96).

By aligning his stance with the views of the Florentine chroniclers, Dante roots his reading of the city’s political turmoil in the documentary evidence of contemporary witnesses. By adopting the rhetoric of the chroniclers, moreover, he steers clear of the grandiose claims by the classical epics of the civil war. For Lucan and Statius, civil war embroils Rome in insoluble moral and political problems: it dismantles the myths of law and order that justify the existence of the empire. The stakes in Florence—though a pawn in the pope’s maneuvers—are not as high. Unlike these epics, finally, a chronicle is wedded to the particulars of the city’s personalities and concrete power play. Yet the division in ancient Rome and the wars in contemporary Florence share in the view of history as a blind fatality inherent in and governing naturalistic doctrines.

The chroniclers, moreover, give a hard edge to Ciacco’s mixture of monstrous fantasies and facts as well as to his self-deception in not wishing to see the link between his gluttony and political vampirism. When the pilgrim confesses his desire to know the fate of some worthy Florentines—Farinata, Tegghiaio, Jacopo Rusticucci, Arrigo, and Mosca, and those others who set their minds on “ben fare” (*Inf.* 6.79–81)—he answers that they have sunk under the heavier weight of their corruption: “Ei son tra l’anime più nere; / diverse colpe giù li grava al fondo” (6.85–86). The phrase “ben fare” (which echoes Ciacco’s words on birth and death—“fare,” “disfare”) highlights the realm of doing and making, that is, work, as the main ingredient of the city’s existence. To do and to make are both acts of the will, and as such they imply action and purpose. The phrase, however, simultaneously carries two contradictory senses: to do well and to do good. Ciacco’s response, in effect, focuses on the discrepancy between contingent, human judgments and the divine perspective on human actions. By the move, Dante exposes the hollowness in the

city's cult of its local pantheon and thereby dismantles its political idolatry. Finally, civic *gravitas* and political rank-ordering come forth as artificial values deprived of any genuine basis in nature and biology.

So satanic, so narrow is this "biology" of politics and ethics, so deep is Dante's anguish at the tribulations to which the civil war has subjected its citizens that his poetry runs the serious danger of casting politics as a vain, irretrievably senseless mythology. From this standpoint Dante's naturalistic stance exceeds the perspective of Augustine, who in his apotheosis of the Heavenly City subverts the ideology of secularism. For all its perversions of the good, for all its different faith and different love, so he maintains, "the earthly city . . . enjoys with the heavenly one," "temporal good things." In what way, however, does Dante believe that the tragic economy of politics as a succession of civil wars can be overcome and redeemed? The answer, no doubt, lies in the sacrificial economy of redemptive history. More to the point, the *Pharsalia* and *Thebaid* are so rethought as to mark the path for an alternate, possible new beginning for history. To achieve this aim, Dante needs to identify a redemptive view of the natural world not imposed from the outside but from within the world's own self-understanding. In this secular light, classical theories of cycles, natural recurrences, and mythical forces of fate chaining human beings can be transcended. In short, a theory of the future is needed, and Dante finds that such a theory depends on the most natural and commonplace event of all: the fact of the birth.

In *Purgatorio* 22, the figuration of Statius unfolds as an autobiography (starting from his birth in Toulouse, though he was actually born in Naples) and as an account of his poetic apprenticeship. In his self-presentation of the totality of his life that pivots on his Christian conversion while writing the *Thebaid*, he radically changes the sense of his life and his past. This change occurs by a reflection on poetry—Virgil's poetry, Statius's own poetry, and the Greco-Roman tradition. Statius asks about the fate of Terence, Varro, Plautus, and Caecilius (*Purg.* 22.97–99), and Virgil answers that they dwell with Persius, with Homer (who drank most deeply at the muses' breast), Euripides, Antiphon, Antigone, and the sorceress Manto (22.100–115). This posthumous reconciliation of classical authors certainly shows Virgil's consciousness of the unity of tradition as well as Statius's poetic reflection on the Greek roots of his own vision. The oblique history of poetry is in turn introduced by Statius's acknowledgment of Virgil's poetry as both the "seme" (*Purg.* 21.94) and

“mamma” and “nutrice” (21.97–98). Such a genetic view of poetry suggests, first, the radical originality of Dante’s poetry. It is original in the etymological sense of the word: it brings us back to the origin. Second, it gives him ground for confidence in the fecundity of his spiritual inheritance: voiced by the authority of Virgil, the values of that inheritance could not be wholly false. Finally, these metaphors of poetry’s origins reveal to him the world’s vitality and sustenance. The world is called “pregnant” (*Purg.* 22.76) with the beliefs disseminated by the messengers of the eternal kingdom. This understanding of poetry’s harmonies stands in drastic contrast to the tragic scenario of Thebes’ civil war and of Jocasta’s fratricidal children: their belief in violence and in the tyranny of fate is completely reversed.

The view of poetry as the reversal of the *Thebaid* (a story in which characters fornicate with their own fancies) continues in the canto with the “mistranslation” of two lines from the *Aeneid* (3.56–57): “Per che non reggi tu, o sacra fame / de l’oro, l’appetito de’ mortali?” (*Purg.* 22.40–41). “Sacra” means both profane and holy. More to the point, the Virgilian lines evoke a political context: Aeneas’s first foundation of a city in Thracia, which he calls from his own name “Aeneadas” (“meo nomen de nomine fingo” [*Aeneid* 3.18]). The foundation is marked by sacrificial offerings, “sacra,” to Venus and the building of an altar in the belief that the city’s beginning occurs by an act of consecration. But a sacrilege had been perpetrated by the violent death inflicted on Polydorus, whose voice—and the memory of the theft of his gold, “auri sacra fames,” which Statius’s lines echo and “appropriate”—enjoins Aeneas to leave the place of profanation: political beginnings require a consecration to the gods but not the sacrilege of founding violence.

It is not in death but in birth that origins are found. Statius, showing how he was transformed by the reading of Virgil’s text, cites the central passage of the Fourth Eclogue: “Secol si rinova; / torna giustizia e primo tempo umano, / e progenie scende da ciel nova” (*Purg.* 22.70–72). The poem is a *genethliacon*, a poem celebrating the birth of Asinius Pollio’s son, and through the omen of his birth Virgil announces the rebirth of the world. The advent of the “novus ordo saeculorum,” in truly Pythagorean fashion, is presented as a return of Justice, or Astraea, a return by which, as in an endless circle of becoming, the past coincides with the future. For this is what a birth means to Virgil—the most repetitive physical fact in nature can break the chain of events, be free or unlike all that has come

before, and, more generally, redefine nature in terms of a grace that perfects but does not erase nature.

From this standpoint we grasp the sense of Cato waiting for the day of the resurrection of the body (*Purg.* 1.73–75) and why the appearance of Statius is also described in terms of the risen Christ. What the two scenes share is that bodies are not circumscribed within a natural, realistic principle of materiality. They are spiritualized, and yet they would be inconceivable without that materiality. That is to say, the values of naturalism and generally secularism are unavoidably coextensive with theology: each needs the other and each caricatures the other. Taken together they end up resembling each other. Undoubtedly, the generation of Oedipus's family may even look like a variant of the Trinitarian conception. The resemblance between the myth and the mystery, however, simply suggests that human monstrosity bears the ineradicable sign of its proximity to the sacred. By virtue of this proximity between nature and grace, theology both recognizes nature's irreplaceable role in its discourse and signals a necessary transfiguration of nature.

One final, basic point must be made about beginnings and sacredness. When Anchises dies in Sicily, Aeneas discovers that death hallows the ground: by burying the dead, human beings reclaim the ground. But so does a birth. The fact of birth inaugurates the sacredness and mystery of all beginnings, and it posits a new beginning and stakes a future on that ground. As such, it turns into the central figuration in Dante's moral and poetic experience. Morally, the event of birth ends up clashing with the reality of sinners, such as Ciaccio, who refuse to take guilt upon themselves, cling to the habits in the persuasion that this world is the source of their worth, and obliterate the differences between past, present, and future. Sin, for Dante, comes through as a habit of sin, which reflects the understanding of life in terms of the physical cycles of bodies. Poetically, as Statius had intuited, the journey of poetry asks that we venture out of the familiar, purely natural imaginings.

One hero from the classical world, Ulysses, undertakes such a journey and leaves behind his natural world—his father, son, and wife, Penelope. His willed voyage—which is a voyage of the mind—bears an uncanny affinity to Dante's exile and journey in the beyond. There is, however, a difference between them, just as there is a difference between Aeneas and Ulysses in their respective classical epics. Ulysses' journey comes through

as a circular journey home (from Ithaca back to Ithaca), with all the poignancy nostalgia entails. Aeneas, instead, has no home to go back to, and he can't but venture into an open-ended quest, at times aimlessly, and mistaking every new city he builds along the route as if it were the destined one. In *Inferno* 26, Ulysses comes through as a figure of both Aeneas and Dante: he leaves home, as if here Aeneas, but he plunges into the abyss as his gaze rends the night of the world. By contrast, Dante manages to see God face to face. The difference between them depends on the pilgrim's ability to kick the habit, to see the new in the old, and to grasp the mystery and sense of the beginning.

All this talk about beginning is bound to jar with the obvious detail that the *Divine Comedy* begins in medias res, in the "middle" of life's parabola: "Nel mezzo del cammin di nostra vita" (*Inf.* 1.1). The poem begins indeed "nel mezzo," with the pilgrim taking stock of what is at hand, his irreducible existential situatedness here and now. But this is not the real beginning of the pilgrim's spiritual predicament, which in fact is rooted in distance causes. In the wild woodland he comes to, the pilgrim repeatedly tries to climb the hill to the light, only to be driven back to the dark valley: "i' fui per ritornar più volte volto" (*Inf.* 1.36). The repeated, circular action, as much as the repeated sounds in the line, conveys his impasse: he goes around in a vicious circle and gets nowhere. The lines that immediately follow, however, evoke the time of the day, the hour of the morning when the sun was in the constellation of Aries right there and then and at the moment of Creation:

Temp'era dal principio del mattino,
e 'l sol montava 'n su con quelle stelle
ch'eran con lui quando l'amor divino
mosse di prima quelle cose belle.

(*Inf.* 1.37–40)

Whereas Ulysses willfully follows the movement of the sun in its repetitive pattern, Dante goes to the "beginning," to "birth," and back to love, to what makes things new. He calls on us to think anew and differently.

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Franciscan Economic Discourse in Dante's *Paradiso* 10–13: The Semantics of “Valor”

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In the spirit of serious interdisciplinarity represented by Christopher Kleinhenz's work, I offer here an overview of the sources, directions, and limits of a particular aspect of Dante's relation to economics in his time. In other venues, I have treated the impact on Dante's language of the dramatic changes in economic practice and resulting social organization in the Florentine Duecento and Trecento.¹ Here, I turn from the history of economic practice to that of economic theory, embedded, as it was in Dante's time, in a broad and dense theological context.

Dante and Contemporary Economic Theory

Although the discussion of economic problems and ideas that comprised late medieval economic theory is a significant cultural tradition, it does not get a great deal of attention from Dantists. For example, even Karl Vossler, in his great and comprehensive work on Dante and medieval culture, does not deal with Dante as a reader of or contributor to economic theory.² Yet, especially because of the dramatic transformation of commercial practices between the time of Dante's great-great-grandfather and his own, particularly in Dante's home city and region, reflection on commerce, its elements and above all its ontological foundations was, in Dante's youth, a “hot” area of social philosophy.

I submit that Dante was more knowledgeable about the philosophy of economics in his day than has heretofore been recognized. I will begin to create the context for showing how his economic learning affected his

writing, especially—and perhaps, to some readers, surprisingly—in *Paradiso*. I contend and document elsewhere that, especially in *Paradiso* 8–17, Dante draws very significantly on the writing of a leading Franciscan economic theorist, Petrus Johannis Olivi. This integration of Olivian economic theory occurs in two ways: in part directly, through use of language in Olivi's letters and treatises, and in part indirectly, through a treatise attributed to Jacopone da Todi, which reads Olivi in a manner shaped by the economic and mystical thought of Bernard of Clairvaux.³

In this essay I address only Cantos 10–13 and focus on the way in which Dante uses, on three occasions in those four cantos, the word *valor* or *valore*.⁴ My goal is simply to highlight economics—understood in thirteenth- rather than twenty-first-century terms—as a theme of *Paradiso*. In other words, I wish to raise a question in the minds of learned readers about an economic level in Dante's language, so that when next they read the four cantos highlighted in this essay, they will be open to the possibility that contemporary economic theory is one of the semantic fields a Dantist must know in order to read these cantos well—especially if she or he wants to make sense of one, and perhaps more, of the cantos' unique, even puzzling, textual features.

Four Cantos: Their Language and Themes

The most conspicuous themes of Cantos 10–13 are, in my reading, three:⁵ biographies and evaluations of the work of learned men, hermeneutics and its challenges, and the distribution of resources in the universe.⁶ The first theme asks us to consider which thinkers and writers have had their ideas legitimated by admission to Paradise? Who is—in God's view, not the church's (and with special attention to the ideas of St. Francis and St. Dominic)—orthodox and who is not? The second theme involves the difficulties faced by the pilgrim, “Berta and Martin,” or the reader in assessing ideas about God and his ordering of the universe. Finally, we must reflect on how God's art creates *value*: What is the difference between the apparent and true character of poverty? What roles do wealth and greed play in human life? How does Nature grow and increase God's creations?

The narrative of these dense cantos begins as *Paradiso* 10 opens with the entrance of the pilgrim and his guide, Beatrice, into that part of Heaven

ruled by the Sun, the stage upon which the pilgrim will encounter the souls of the illuminated, the wise and learned who have devoted their lives to studying God's structuring of all facets of the world. This is one of the points where the poet Dante seems to make a new beginning, as he does also in the tenth cantos of both *Inferno* and *Purgatorio*. Entering the Heaven of the Sun, the travelers reach at last a part of Heaven no longer in the shadow cast by the Earth, filled with souls who are beyond the reproach that earthly shadow suggests.

At the beginning of *Paradiso* 10, Dante announces a new challenge, both for himself and for his readers, in one of the longest and most complex of the canto introductions in the *Commedia*:

Guardando nel suo Figlio con l'Amore
che l'uno e l'altro eternalmente spira,
lo primo ed ineffabile Valore,
quanto per mente e per loco si gira
con tant'ordine fè, ch'esser non puote
sanza gustar di lui chi ciò rimira.

Leva dunque, lettore, a l'alte ruote
meco la vista, dritto a quella parte
dove l'un moto e l'altro si percuote;
e lì comincia a vagheggiar ne l'arte
di quel maestro che dentro a sé l'ama,
tanto che mai da lei occhio non parte.

Vedi come da indi si dirama
l'oblico cerchio che i pianeti porta,
per sodisfare al mondo che li chiama.

E se la strada lor non fosse torta,
molta virtù nel ciel sarebbe in vano,
e quasi ogni potenza qua giù morta;
e se dal dritto più o men lontano
fosse 'l partire, assai sarebbe manco
e giù e su dell'ordine mondano.

Or ti riman, lettor, sovra 'l tuo banco,
dietro pensando a ciò che si preliba,
s'esser vuoi lieto assai prima che stanco.

Messo t'ho innanzi: omai per te ti ciba;
ché a sé torce tutta la mia cura
quella material ond'io son fatto scriba.

Lo ministro maggior della natura
che del valor del ciel lo mondo imprenta
e col suo lume il tempo ne misura,

con quella parte che su si rammenta
congiunto, sì girava per le spire
in che più tosto ognora s'appresenta;
e io era con lui; ma del salire
non m'accors' io, se non com' uom s'accorge,
anzi 'l primo pensier, del suo venire.⁷
(Par. 10.1–36)

In this passage, Dante directly addresses his reader not once, but twice,⁸ occasioning in the attentive reader alertness, even anxiety, as to the difficulty of the interpretive task these lines propose. On the first of these two occasions, he invites the reader to join with him in mystical contemplation of the triune God: an invitation that must give most readers pause, to ask, at least, if they can possibly be prepared to take such a step (10.7–15). On the second occasion, Dante emphasizes the need for the reader to make a special effort to understand what is to follow in his narrative, on the grounds that the poet must use all his talents to render his vision into words properly, without giving thought to how he might make the reader's task easier (10.22–27).

Moreover, it is in the almost tremulous context—the state of high alert—created by the crossing of this border and the two urgent appeals to the reader that follow fast upon each another that Dante twice uses the word that I wish to draw attention to: *valore*.

The most basic meaning of the word is “value.” Nonetheless, two of the most recent and distinguished translators of the poem, Robert Hollander and Jean Hollander, render it here on both occasions not as “value” but rather as “power,” sometimes capitalizing that word and sometimes not. Charles Singleton too in the first instance (v. 3) translates the word as “power,” while in the second instance (v. 29) he uses “worth,” much closer to *valor's* basic meaning.⁹

Before considering what makes these eminent translators prefer “power” to “value” in the first instance, let me acknowledge what has likely already occurred to many, especially Anglophone, readers, namely, that the homologous English word *valor*, while clearly a derivative of the word's original Latin form, has come in English to signify neither value nor power but rather boldness and courage, a quality of subjectivity often associated with chivalric or martial figures, such as the Cacciaguida whom Dante creates in subsequent cantos, quite cognizant of the multivalence of the word.¹⁰ *Valor* is a slippery word in more than one European tongue.

Tracking and contextualizing its semantic nuances will help readers to do what Dante requires of them here: to sit patiently on a bench, like good pupils, and study what he has set forth until they understand as fully as they are able what he has worked hard to make each of his words speak.

Clearly, when Dante first writes of “*Valore*” in *Paradiso* 10, he is connecting it with two other words in the canto’s opening sentence, *Figlio* and *Amore*. One need not have studied the *Commedia* for long to be able to recognize that these three words, in the first three verses of Canto 10, together constitute one of Dante’s many modes of naming the Holy Trinity: “*Figlio*,” the Son; “*Amore*,” the Holy Spirit; and “*Valore*,” Value, or, as the translators cited above prefer, Power, God the Father.

Of course it would be a mistake to understand “*Valore*” here as *merely* Power, or God the Father. Perhaps this contention will, on its face, seem absurd, for what can it mean, in describing a profoundly Christian poem, to say that “*Valore*” means *more* than *just* God the Father? I pose the question, however, purely at the level of semantics. Why did Dante choose to name God with a word that primarily means “value” or “worth” when other, less slippery words—for example, “*Padre*,” corresponding to “*Figlio*,” or “*Potere*,” apparently the choice of notable and learned interpreters and translators—might have served just as well? What does Dante gain by referring to God as “*Valore*”? To understand Dante’s semantic choice here, it is necessary to explore the contexts in which the word *valore* was actually used in Dante’s time, including contemporary Latin texts.

The context for such semantic investigation of Dante’s word choice is, moreover, inflected by other linguistic features, episodes, and themes of *Paradiso* 10–13. Just after the opening, Trinitarian tercet, there occurs language that, as Hollander notes, has “caused difficulty.” The difficult lines (10.4–5) are the predicate completing the subject “*lo primo ed ineffabile Valore*.” As these lines state, the role of “*primo Valore*” is to make, or create, with order, everything that moves, whether it moves through the mind (an idea) or through space (a thing). What seems to cause difficulty, especially to modern readers, is the parallel treatment of ideas and things.

God is represented as making both ideas and things move in such fashion that contemplation not only of the movement of ideas but also of the movement of things will necessarily give a taste of *Valore*, or of God as *Valore*. The tercet concludes, then, by pointing out that the relation

between the first creator of Value and the valuable mental or space-occupying things he makes is so intimate that anyone who contemplates either ideas or things gets a taste of God himself. The second part of this suggestion of a path to mystical experience of God—for that is exactly what “gustar” (taste) makes it—may seem odd, in that contemplating the movement of things is not generally recommended as highly in Christian mystical tradition as contemplation of ideas.

Let us pursue a bit further the verb *gustar*. One commentator has remarked that ingestion is an important theme in this entire canto, which mentions not only tasting God (10.6) but also having a foretaste of the joy of thought (10.23), feeding oneself with ideas (10.25), the pilgrim’s thirst for the wine of understanding (10.88), and—here’s the part that may not seem quite to fit the sequence—the fattening of sheep (10.96). A propos of all this tasting, eating, and drinking, he notes, “[The theme of ingestion] has a perhaps surprising presence in this canto that, in light of its higher interests, might seem an inappropriate place for such concerns.”¹¹

Despite its seeming inappropriateness, one can easily expand this list of aspects of eating—consuming—in the Heaven of the Sun. Also present is the theme of food: the obliquity of the path of the zodiac makes the Heavens bear fruit—Heaven’s “virtù,” or *power*, is for this reason not exercised in vain, and every “potenza,” potency or power, is therefore alive rather than dead (10.17–18). Moreover, the reader learns in *Paradiso* 10.35–36 about how one thought is produced by, grown from, another.

The Trinitarian emphasis of the opening tercet of *Paradiso* 10 also continues throughout this canto and beyond into those which follow it. Dante notes that the brightness of the circle of doctors in the Heaven of the Sun is the result of the Father’s constantly revealing to them “come spira e come figlia” (10.49–51). Understanding the Trinity makes the doctors brighter; if one understands the Trinity, one has the key to many other realms of thought. It is as if God is showing off his craftsmanship in manifesting his triune self, thus giving to his creatures a model of how to produce something that will have enduring, living, growing value. The theme of the Trinity is, to be sure, very closely allied to the theme of the Incarnation, the emanation of divine value into human value, as is shown somewhat later when it is revealed (*Par.* 13.26–27; cf. also 14.28–31) that the two circles made up of a dozen doctors each are singing complementary praises of the Incarnation and Trinity.

The Semantic Contexts of “Valor” in the Late Duecento and Early Trecento

As far as I have been able to discover, “Valor” is not widely used as an epithet for the Father in theological discussions of the Holy Trinity. In Thomas Aquinas’s *Summa theologiae*, for example, while there are certainly passages describing creation as the result of the loving interaction of the persons of the Trinity, such passages in no place that I have yet found employ *valor* or a semantically similar word.¹² Many commentators point out that Dante seems in this opening tercet to be emphasizing the orthodox Roman character of his belief regarding the Trinity, with the Spirit emanating from both the Father and the Son, rather than from the Father alone—an issue that was often discussed in Dante’s lifetime, most notably at the Council of Lyons in 1274. Yet I have been unable to find in any of the many contributions to the theology of the Trinity per se likely known to Dante any locus where God is named “Valore,” a lack that makes me still more curious about Dante’s word choice. Moreover, Dante stresses the specificity of this word choice when he modifies it with “primo” and “ineffabile.” Where is the God spoken of as “primo Valore” or “ineffabile Valore,” rather than, say, “primo Potere” or “ineffabile Potenza”?

The answer, it turns out, can be traced to discussions of economics that treat the subject as a divine matter, informed by the nature and structure of the Holy Trinity. The history of medieval economic traditions provides us with several such discussions in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries. To be sure, virtually all discussions of economics in the period must of necessity discuss *valor*: then as now value is a key concept in economics, and the word recurs over and over in both Scholastic and Franciscan writings on economics and commerce. This should surprise no one: economics examines how resources are created and distributed and how value is attributed to these resources.¹³

That such discussion of value should be deemed to have any relation whatever with the Holy Trinity is, to be sure, a rather strange association to modern ears. In Dante’s time, however, this association of value with the Trinity and particularly with the Father was a key concept in economic theory, especially in the context of the raging critique of something Dante himself claimed to deplore, namely, usury. As readers of the *Inferno*, for example, will recall, usury was deemed a crime against nature. This was emphasized especially in Scholastic thought, because usurers implicitly claimed to create value by artificial means. Specifically, usurers

usurped through human ingenuity the prerogative of God, especially of God the Father.

The orthodox position in the Church of Rome was that value might legitimately be created only naturally, in a line of descent following from God's creation.¹⁴ Crops could grow; craftsmen could make things. Such actions properly created *valor*. On the other hand, for example, lending money to undertake risky commercial voyages—investment and speculation—did not, according to traditional church thought, produce anything. Anyone who claimed it did, who acted as if it did, was a sinner, in part because he was attempting to take from God the exclusive right to be the source of all value. Particularly outrageous was the usurer's claim to have the right to profit from time, to have money "grow" over time, for time did not belong to humans but to God.

All the church's writers about sin and society in Dante's period necessarily wrote about economics, including its abuse in usury; to write about economics was to write about the creation of value by (good) natural means or by (bad) artificial means. The weight and centrality of this dichotomy between good production of value and bad will be clear to anyone who has visited the Arena, or Scrovegni, Chapel in Padua, and examined Giotto's frescoes there. As one looks toward the altar, one sees, on the right side, a depiction of the ultimate in the divinely ordained creation of value, emanating from the Father through the Holy Spirit: the productive, pregnant Virgin Mary. Giotto here depicts the only legitimate source of all productivity. The scene of the Annunciation, with the Incarnation of God's value in human form, in Mary's womb, is the model lesson in proper economics, in this chapel built by a repentant usurer's family. On the left, or sinister, side of the chapel's altar, though—counterposed to the Incarnation—is the model of the artificial creation of value: Judas's betrayal of Christ, the kiss rewarded with thirty pieces of silver, cited over and over again in fourteenth-century art and writing as the very model of usury. The swelling womb is opposed visually to the sack of coins, the second a perverse image of the first.

Scholastics, Thomas Aquinas preeminent among them, wrote at length about usury. Moreover, usury's character and limits were often debated at the papal court in Avignon while Dante was at work on the *Paradiso*. Indeed Dante, with immense ferocity, accuses the Avignon popes of being usurers themselves.

But the people who were doing the cutting-edge thinking about usury at the time—writing about the proper origin and nature of the creation of value—were not scholastics but Franciscans. As has recently been shown, it was a Franciscan who advised Giotto on the creation of the iconographic program for the Scrovegni chapel.¹⁵ Similarly, I contend, it was a Franciscan who inspired Dante to give God the name “*primo ed ineffabile Valore*.” In fact, this Franciscan and his writings on economics hover behind the entire central portion of the *Paradiso*.

Franciscan Economics

That there should be a Franciscan source for this portion of the *Paradiso* is fitting, for it is here that St. Francis himself is vividly evoked at considerable length. Moreover, his eminent follower, St. Bonaventure, soon appears and plays an important role. Let us look again at what happens in *Paradiso* 10–13.

Soon after Dante and Beatrice cross a kind of heavenly border and enter into the Heaven of the Sun at the opening of *Paradiso* 10, they meet St. Thomas Aquinas, the famous thirteenth-century Dominican and Aristotelian. Though modern readers have not recognized what he says to them as substantially economic discourse, economic discourse is in large part what it is, in medieval terms. The kind of economic doctrine Thomas here articulates, however, is not the kind one might expect from him: it is not Scholastic but Franciscan. Thomas narrates the life of someone who could indeed be described as a thirteenth-century economic theorist, or at least another very serious student of the nature of value—St. Francis of Assisi. Thomas recounts, among other things, Francis's spectacular rejection of the wealth of his own father, a successful merchant engaged in the lucrative textile trade between central Italy and France. In *Paradiso* 11.58–59 Thomas recalls the scene—also famously depicted by Giotto—of the naked young Francis handing back to his father every stitch of clothing he had worn on his back: “. . . giovinetto, in Guerra / del padre corse. . . .” Memorably, Dante's Thomas builds his narrative of Francis's life around the latter's “love affair” with and marriage to his Lady Poverty.

This context, then, reinforces the sense that one should look to discussions of *valor* by members of the Franciscan order to understand why

Dante chooses to use “Valor” rather than, for example, “Poter,” in the two places early in *Paradiso* 10 highlighted above. In fact, much of what Dante writes in Cantos 10–13 through the voice of Aquinas, in 14 through the voice of King Solomon, and in 15–18 through the voice of Dante’s ancestor Cacciaguida derives from Franciscan analysis of the nature of God’s world and the way resources and value are distributed in it. Specifically, Dante builds here on the language of Pierre de Jean Olivi, or Peter John Olivi.

The Issue of Dante’s Relation to Olivian Texts and to the “Spirituals”

When I suggest Olivi as a source for Dante, I expect some red flags to go up, for Dantists will be mindful of two things in regard to the suggestion of such a connection. One has to do with a passage in Dante’s text itself, and the second with the history of Dante scholarship since the late nineteenth century. Let me begin by addressing the first source of hesitation with regard to seeing Olivi as a source in the *Paradiso*.

First, to be sure, Olivi’s leading follower, Ubertino da Casale, is criticized by Dante in *Paradiso* 12.124. There, the leading Franciscan whom Dante counterposed to St. Thomas’s Dominican presence—namely, St. Bonaventure—says that there are still some Franciscans who can claim that “‘I’ mi son quel ch’i’soglio.” But, he adds, “non fia da Casal nè d’Acquasparta, / là onde vegnon ali alla scrittura, / ch’uno la fugge, e altro la coarta.” Nonetheless, it must be remembered, first, that Dante likely draws on an allegorical text by Ubertino for some of the language in his descriptions of Francis and Thomas.¹⁶ Moreover, Peter John Olivi, in any case, is not Ubertino da Casale. Nor was the dissension over the Franciscan Rule at the same stage in Olivi’s time as it was a bit later, in Ubertino’s. As Ovidio Capitani noted in 1996:

Olivi and Ubertino da Casale are very close, as is well known: and yet they differ precisely because both are animated by a substantially identical commitment to examining society framed by the history of their respective periods, which are not the same, since the times of Nicholas III, of Nicholas IV, of Celestine V, of Boniface VIII are not those of Clement V or of John XXII.¹⁷

Olivi had joined the order around 1260 at Béziers, the city between Narbonne and Montpellier notorious as the site of the massacre in 1209

of perhaps 20,000 purported Cathars, during the Albigensian Crusade. Although Olivi had been accused of heresy in 1282, his orthodoxy was established in 1287 at the order's General Chapter in Montpellier and again when the General Chapter met at Paris itself in 1292. He died a Catholic, at Narbonne, in March 1298 and was buried

in the choir of the Franciscan church there. . . . His tomb soon became a pilgrimage site. Angelo Clareno says that on the anniversary of his death the crowds rivaled those at the Portiuncula [at Assisi]. Another source announces that the pilgrims included not only laymen but cardinals, bishops, and other church leaders.¹⁸

The leading American Olivi scholar, David Burr, remarks of Olivi: "Perhaps he died just in time." Burr explains that, at the following year's General Chapter meeting, in 1299, Olivi's

teachings were condemned and those who used his books were excommunicated. . . . [There followed] a series of letters from the minister general ordering that 'the sect of brother Peter John' be broken up, his apparently recalcitrant disciples punished or dispersed, and his writings collected and burned. Visitors were dispatched to the province of Provence to carry out the purge. One of them, the provincial minister of Aragon, was commissioned to draw up a form of abjuration to be forced on all the brothers in the entire province [of Provence]. . . . Boniface VIII lent even more manpower to the hunt by sending the minister of the province of Genoa to southern France.¹⁹

The persecution of those who had, after Olivi's death, come to be known as the Spirituals "abated only in 1309, when the Spirituals' lay supporters managed to convince [the Avignon] Pope Clement V that intervention was necessary. He summoned spokesmen for both sides, thus initiating a new phase in the controversy."²⁰

When I suggest a new look at Olivian writings as a source for portions of the *Paradiso*, Dantists will be mindful, second, of the immensely prolific, and sometimes extreme, tradition in Dante studies that tie him very closely to Franciscanism and Gioachism. This current is described concisely, and with considerable restraint, in an article published by Nicolò Mineo, stressing the many distinctions between Dante's writings and those of the Spirituals.²¹ Mineo, in turn, builds to a large degree on the earlier work of Raoul Manselli, whose numerous contributions on Olivi, Gioachism, and their relation to Dante are well known.²² Mineo describes

the extreme Dante-as-Spiritual-and-Gioachite school of criticism in the following terms:

The final bit of the nineteenth century and certain moments and certain cultural segments of our own century are typified by an interest in the theme [of the relation between Dante's thought and that of the Spiritual Franciscans], stimulated primarily by newly available information about the spiritual life of the later Middle Ages or by the suggestions and predilections of a mentality which is first of all modernist, and then neo-spiritual and anti-capitalist, and in some cases populist. A well-defined segment of French and Italian medieval studies developed an ever more fixed tendency not only to recognize certain affinities between Dante and the Spirituals, but to propose [the existence of] a relationship between his religious positions and those of certain exponents of the rigorist wing of Franciscanism, like Peter John Olivi and Ubertino da Casale which is [claimed to be] almost total or [with Dante's ideas becoming] almost completely derivative. . . . Consequently the problem of the relationship with the thought of Joachim of Flora, known [to Dante] directly or through the mediation of these same Spiritual Franciscans is also brought to the fore.²³

My undertaking here is distinct from this extreme tradition in a number of ways. I will not suggest that Dante's ideas are "almost completely derivative" from Olivi's, much less Ubertino's or Joachim's. I do maintain that Dante uses some of Olivi's language to voice a critique of practices and underlying concepts that would later become known as "capitalism." My agenda, however, is not to enlist Dante in any modern polemic but rather to understand as clearly and correctly as I can the language of Dante's text, particularly portions of it that are agreed by broad consensus to present interpretive problems. I am interested specifically in any relation that Dante's language may have to the remarkable economic history of his time, that of the "commercial revolution."²⁴ Historians of medieval economics agree that Olivi is a major figure in the development of economic thought, and it is in that light, rather than as a figure in the wars between Franciscan factions that, I think, Dantists need to look at his writings.

Olivi had taught in Florence, at Santa Croce, during the period when Dante is thought to have studied there.²⁵ It is important to note that "Olivi's writings circulated not only in the original Latin but in translation as well."²⁶ Yet only in recent decades has it become feasible for scholars to develop much direct acquaintance with reliable and complete versions of Olivi's *economic* writings, since most copies in the Midi, where they had presumably been the most numerous, were systematically sought out and

burned. Editions of individual Olivian essays and letters on economic questions, mostly based on single manuscripts preserved in France and Italy, have appeared increasingly since David Burr's landmark study of 1989, which focuses, however, not on Olivi's economic thought as a whole but only on his role in the *usus pauper* controversy. This controversy became very important in the order and in the church as a whole primarily after Olivi's death, and it drew on Olivi's economic thought for its own ecclesiological purposes. Olivi's ideas on economics, and especially on the nature of the creation of value, however, deserve the independent attention of Dantists.

Olivi's New Economic Language and the *Paradiso*

Let us turn then to Olivi's newly available economic writings, in relation to Dante and the *Paradiso*. Study of certain of Olivi's works on economics produces a number of striking parallels to the economic theory and history that Dante sets out in *Paradiso* 10–17, not only at the level of ideas and interpretations of economic practices but even at the level of language. The leading Italian economic historian who writes about Olivi, Giacomo Todeschini, published in 1996 a lengthy historiographical review essay on Olivi's economic thought, providing fuller information on this topic than, for example, Raoul Manselli or Charles Davis could.²⁷

Todeschini's review essay highlights the conceptual and linguistic originality of Olivi's work on economics, seen within its French context. In particular, he discusses studies of French Franciscan sermons and confessional manuals written in the decades prior to Olivi's career that demonstrate "an interesting linguistic sliding between economic discourses and confessional and penitential discourses" leading ultimately to a thirteenth-century notion and practice that is at the same time judicial, political, and linguistic.²⁸ Todeschini emphasizes here and in a number of still more recent studies that the new economic language Olivi develops, within the context of the output of his French predecessors, is above all based in analysis of the nature of subjectivity. The first subject, the first to see, perceive, feel, and assign value is, to be sure, God the Father, and thus all proper human subjectivity derives from him and should imitate his.

This seems to me the primary area of Olivian economic thinking to be investigated with respect to Dante's use of *valore* in the *Paradiso*, as access

to reliable versions of his texts becomes increasingly possible. I draw the attention of Dantists to four aspects of Dante's imagery and characterization in the *Paradiso* cantos highlighted in this essay that call for investigation.

First, Olivi propounded a controversial view about the moment when the lance pierced Christ's side on the Cross, drawing from his interpretation of this episode ideas about time and the impact on human life of this moment in the life and death of the Son of God.²⁹ This corresponds to a passage in *Paradiso* 13.40–41.³⁰

Second, Olivi's positions on economics and especially on the controversies that came to split the Franciscan order are characterized by Burr as occupying a middle ground.³¹ Burr also notes that Olivi presents a portrait of Bonaventure as occupying the middle ground.³² In *Paradiso* Dante depicts a Bonaventure who defines a middle Franciscan ground, distancing himself from the extremes of both Ubertino of Casale and Matteo of Acquasparta.

Third, in his discussions of economics Olivi extensively uses the image of planting a garden and growing things in it. Growth and gardening are also prominent in the cantos of *Paradiso* under examination here.³³

Finally, Olivi writes on the lamentable use of twisted words, which lead simple friars to cover themselves with a cloak of deception.³⁴ This is suggestive of some language both in the *Paradiso* and earlier in the *Commedia*.

The goal of this essay has been to encourage Dantists to look more carefully at the broad and neglected medieval cultural tradition of economic theory, not merely the scholastic tradition associated with Aquinas. The Franciscan tradition is highly complex, and major contributions to it have only recently become available in edited form. Dantists may hesitate since there has long been an association between interpretive extremism and the relationship of Dante to the Franciscan tradition. To investigate the tradition of economic writing in Franciscanism before and during Dante's time, and especially the language in which this tradition was articulated, need not, however, mean affiliation with an extremist position, especially when the investigator's focus remains on Dante's own language.

Economic theory may not strike Dantists as compelling primarily for two reasons. First, it is not currently seen as particularly relevant to what is "divine." Second, it later became stereotyped as the "dismal science."

Nonetheless, Dante and many of his contemporaries did not see economics in this dim light. Indeed, Dante places his principal analysis of economic theory in a realm of heaven filled with light, because he sees it as a key to understanding what has gone wrong with his world, everything that has corrupted Florence and the relations between church and empire. Even to understand accurately the implications of such a simple word as *valor*, Dantists need to become more conversant with this essential medieval cultural tradition.

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NOTES

Merely to record here my thanks to Professor Christopher Kleinhenz for the invitation to present this material is inadequate, since I owe him gratitude for decades of generous and insightful comments on much of my work on Dante. In particular, over many years, it was my great pleasure and remarkable learning experience to work under his direction on the editorial board of *Dante Studies*. Moreover, if I have any lived experience of what a “convivium,” a learned banquet, can offer in terms of delight and illumination, it is due to many collegial dinners he has organized at conferences in Italy and the United States.

1. See “Dante e lo sviluppo delle istituzioni bancarie a Firenze: ‘i subiti guadagni,’” in *Dante: Da Firenze all’aldilà*, ed. Michelangelo Picone, Atti del terzo Seminario Dantesco Internazionale, Firenze, 2000 (Florence: Franco Cesati, 2001), 249–61; and “Virility, Nobility, and Banking: The Crossing of Discourses in Dante’s Tenzzone with Forese,” in *Dante 2000: Themes and Problems*, ed. Teodolinda Barolini and H. Wayne Storey (New York: Fordham University Press, 2004), 241–58.

2. *Mediaeval Culture: An Introduction to Dante and His Times*, 2 vols., trans. William Cranston Lawton (New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing, 1958). Interestingly, the useful online database of medieval studies, Iter, does not yet include medieval economics as one of its “general fields” for searches.

3. The argument is set forth in full in my book-in-progress *Dante’s Divine Economies: Lineage, Wealth, and Prophecy in the “Paradiso.”* In particular, I have been obliged to exclude from the present introduction any treatment of the Bernardine reading of portions of Petrus Johannis Olivi attributed to Jacopone da Todi, cited by Ovidio Capitani in “Francescanesimo e società tra Duecento e Quattrocento,” in *La Presenza francescana tra medioevo e modernità*, ed. Mario Chessa and Marco Poli (Città di Castello: Vallecchi, 1996), 177–88, at 180 n. 20.

4. Edward Allen Fay’s *Concordance of the “Divina Commedia”* (Cambridge: Dante Society, 1888), 751, lists twenty-eight occurrences of *valor* or *valore* in the poem, of which sixteen, or nearly 60 percent, are to be found in the *Paradiso*.

5. I do not mean to neglect Dante’s careful preparation for the development of the theme of *valor* in the cantos preceding the opening of *Paradiso* 10. Indeed, the whole of Canto 8, dominated by an exchange between the pilgrim and Carlo Martello, king of Hungary, son of Charles II of Anjou and elder brother of Robert of Anjou and Naples, is a reflection on the themes of avarice and the natural, and the relation between them, as could be shown in detail in another venue. The word *valor* then appears in Canto 10, where Folco di Marsiglia remarks that, in Paradise, the souls do not repent of their weakness but rather laugh joyously reflecting on the “valor” that ordered and provided for the universe in such a way that they are marked by a particular tendency, which in this part of

Heaven is the influence of Venus. Folco's remark introduces a shocking and illuminating example of the paradox of divine *valor*: the positioning in Paradise of the prostitute Raab, a dramatic demonstration of the difference between human values and God's. This paradox is crowned by the contrast between Raab's position in Paradise and that of the contemporary church, which Dante condemns in the final word of Canto 9 as "adultero."

6. This theme is further highlighted by the motif of ingestion of food and drink, discussed below.

7. This and subsequent quotations from the text of the poem are drawn from *La divina commedia*, ed. G.A. Scartazzini and Giuseppe Vandelli (Milan: Hoepli, 1965).

8. Indeed, Hollander points out (*Paradiso: A Verse Translation*, 241) that the first address here is triple, "with three imperatives, each in the first line of a tercet, marking its triune shape, which breaks a single action into three moments, matching the opening Trinitarian proem of the canto."

9. *The Divine Comedy*, vol. 3, *Paradiso*, part 1, *Text*, trans. Charles S. Singleton (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1991).

10. For an investigation of medieval usage of the term in this sense in the Midi, see the classic study by Alexander H. Schutz, "The Provençal Expression *pretz e valor*," *Speculum* 19 (1934): 488–93.

11. Hollander, *Paradiso: A Verse Translation*, 241, note to *Paradiso* 10.6. For the sake of concision, I defer to another occasion examination of the Eucharistic implications of the introduction of the concept of "tasting the Lord" here.

12. One such passage is quoted in its entirety in Singleton's commentary on this opening tercet in *Paradiso* 10, its source in the *Summa* being identified as I, q. 45, a. 6. Dante Alighieri, *The Divine Comedy*, vol. 3, *Paradiso*, part 2, *Commentary*, trans. and ed. Charles S. Singleton (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1975), 175–76. Another is I, q. 45, a. 6, as cited by Scartazzini and Vandelli in their gloss to this tercet (692).

13. It is worth noting here that some have also seen references to commerce in this portion of the *Paradiso*. For example, Francesco Torraca, commenting on 10.70–73, according to Hollander (*Paradiso: A Verse Translation*, 244), sees Dante's explanation of his inability to record the beauty of the songs the doctors sing as analogous to the value of jewels that a ruler forbids anyone to export from his kingdom as such a commercial reference, perhaps originating in an episode in the merchant Marco Polo's *Il Milione*.

14. On medieval views of usury and related issues, the standard studies include John Thomas Noonan, *The Scholastic Analysis of Usury* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1957); Jacques Le Goff, *La Bourse et la vie: économie et religion au Moyen Age* (Paris: Hachette, 1986); Odd Langholm, *Economics in the Medieval Schools: Wealth, Exchange, Value, Money, and Usury according to the Paris Theological Tradition, 1200–1350* (Leiden: Brill, 1992); and, most recently, Lianna Farber, *An Anatomy of Trade in Medieval Writing: Value, Consent, and Community* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2006).

15. See Anne Derbes and Mark Sandona, "Barren Metal and Fruitful Womb: The Program of Giotto's Arena Chapel in Padua," *Art Bulletin* 80.2 (1998): 274–91; and Louise Bourdua, *The Franciscans and Art Patronage in Late Medieval Italy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

16. Hollander, *Paradiso: A Verse Translation*, 266, 11.37–39 note. See Ubertino da Casale, *Arbor vitae crucifixa Jesu*, ed. Charles T. Davis (Turin: Bottega d'Erasmus, 1961).

17. "Francescanesimo e società tra Duecento e Quattrocento," 181 (my translation). For the latest editions of texts by and studies of Olivi, Dantists may wish to consult the online journal published by the Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales at <http://oliviana.revues.org/document63.html>. Also useful for the period 1989–99 is David Burr's *Olivi Page*, http://www.history.vt.edu/Burr/OliviPage/Olivi_Page.html, especially the links to secondary studies published during that decade.

18. David Burr, *Olivi and Franciscan Poverty: The Origins of the "Usus Pauper" Controversy* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1989), 124–25; for further information, see 124, notes 67–69.

19. *Ibid.*, 125.

20. *Ibid.*, 126.

21. "Gli Spirituali francescani e l'Apocalisse" di Dante," *Rassegna della letteratura italiana* 102.1 (1998): 26–46.
22. Hollander (*Paradiso: A Verse Translation*, 298, note to vv. 124–26) directs his readers to Manselli for an overview of Dante's response to the Spiritual Franciscans.
23. Mineo, "Gli Spirituali francescani," translation mine.
24. The term was made famous by Robert S. Lopez, *The Commercial Revolution of the Middle Ages, 950–1350* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976).
25. F. Sarri, "Pietro di Giovanni Olivi e Ubertino da Casale maestri di teologia a Firenze," *Studi francescani* 22 (1925): 116.
26. Burr, *Olivi and Franciscan Poverty*, 125; for further information, see n. 70.
27. "Il pensiero economico di Pietro Giovanni Olivi nella recente storiografia," in *La presenza francescana tra medioevo e modernità*, ed. Mario Chessa e Marco Pou (Florence: Vallecchi, 1996).
28. *Ibid.*, 223, 225.
29. Burr, *Olivi and Franciscan Poverty*, 126–27.
30. See Hollander, *Paradiso: A Verse Translation*, note s.v.
31. Burr, *Olivi and Franciscan Poverty*, 68–69, 71.
32. *Ibid.*, 78.
33. *Ibid.*, 69.
34. *Ibid.*, 80.

In Memoriam Michelangelo Picone (1942–2009)

PAOLO CHERCHI

It is indeed a sad task to undertake the eulogy of a colleague a few years one's junior. It is sadder still if he happens to be a dear friend and an admired scholar: the field has lost a champion, and you have lost the person whom you secretly designated as the most trustworthy writer of your own obituary. This scholar and friend was Michelangelo Picone. If I voice some personal considerations in these lines, it is because I am sure that many friends and admirers of Michelangelo feel his loss as I do. He had numerous friends in America, where he taught for many years and where he died, having returned after a long period of teaching in Switzerland.

Picone was born in Sicily in 1943 and was still very young when his family moved to Certaldo. He was proud of his Sicilian origin but was in fact a Tuscan by upbringing. San Gimignano, a town bordering on his Certaldo, is the city where in June 2009 the conference "Il Revival cavalleresco dal *Don Chisciotte* a *Ivanhoe* (e oltre)," which Picone had organized, turned out to be a somber memorial for its organizer.

Picone graduated from the University of Florence, writing his dissertation (a critical edition of the moral verse of Guittone d'Arezzo) under the mentorship of Gianfranco Contini. It was an auspicious beginning, and even though Michelangelo never produced a critical edition, he remained a Romance philologist in the Italian tradition, though never a typical *continiano*, because his limpid prose set him apart from other *continiani* who were so eager to imitate their masters' style. He taught for a short period in Fribourg, Switzerland, but in 1968 he moved to the University of Florida in Gainesville and one year later to McGill University in Montreal,

where he taught Italian literature until 1990. He then took a position at the University of Zurich where, after nineteen years of teaching, he retired. In 2008 Arizona State University offered him a special chair in Medieval and Renaissance Literatures. He was quite happy to be lecturing again in America, especially because his new host gave him the freedom to broaden his teaching area into that of European literatures, a field that he dominated as a veritable master of European culture. He was not to complete the first year of this prestigious appointment.

Moving through various universities and living in different countries on two continents, Picone created a vast network of acquaintances that made it easy for him to organize international conferences, a cultural activity that he pursued into his last days. He organized no fewer than twenty such meetings, beginning in his early years at McGill. To mention only a few, I would recall the conferences on the *cantari* (1981 and 2005), on the *novella* (1982), on medieval encyclopedism (1992), on the novel in antiquity (1990), and several others devoted to single authors, such as Folgore da San Gimignano (1997), Guittone d'Arezzo (1994), Dante (1997 and 2000), Boccaccio (1996 and 2001), Giovan Battista Basile (2002), Sciascia (1993), and Capuana (1989). It may be difficult to understand why a scholar of his stature would devote so much time and energy, and even finances, to fostering so many conferences. In fact, however, this activity signals the way he understood scholarship and his professional duties. Picone's research was always tuned in to the most recent scholarship, and international conferences were for him the most efficient way to provide a *mise au point* on a given topic that happened to interest him. They were a way of highlighting some important points of research and ways to carry it out. In other words, this frenetic activity was meant to have an authentic cultural impact. And this noble effort was successful owing to his intuition for finding important topics and choosing the best collaborators as well as his impeccable ability to organize a function. These meetings provided occasions for scholars of different critical perspectives and of many provenances to share *viva voce* projects and results of their research. They also emblemize some qualities of their organizer, namely, his international dimension and his vibrant, up-to-date scholarship. They were not tourist destinations, as is often the case, but rather scholarly encounters of the highest calibre. Friendship and warmth were the spice of those scholarly events, for Michelangelo was a splendid host.

A similar notion of “team work” lay behind several cycles of *lecturae* that Picone organized in Zurich. They consisted of readings of Dante (*Lectura Dantis Turicensis*, 3 vols., 2000–2002), Boccaccio (*Lecturae Boccacci: Introduzione al “Decameron,”* 2004), and Petrarch (*Lectura Petrarcae: Il Canzoniere: Lettura micro e macrotestuale*, 2007), which were assigned to different scholars invited to lecture at the University of Zurich. The lectures on Dante followed the traditional pattern of the *lectura Dantis*; those on the *Decameron* were arranged in units of *giornate* and their respective theme. The readings devoted to the *Canzoniere* had a unique strategy: the poems were considered in groups of ten, with great attention devoted to the notion of microtexts and supporting the general idea that Petrarch’s work was constitutionally fragmentary. Many readings were delivered by Picone himself, and he set a high standard of intellectual rigor for each project.

Another major professional commitment was Picone’s editorship of two scholarly journals. He assumed the editorship of *La rassegna europea della letteratura italiana* in 1992, succeeding Geno Pampaloni. He respected the journal’s original plan to publish the work of Italianists from countries other than Italy and to accept contributions in languages other than Italian. Michelangelo inherited a fairly weak journal but left it a thriving one. The other was *L’Alighieri*, of which I will say more below. For many years he was the chief editor of a collection of essays on medieval and Renaissance literature published by Longo Editore in Ravenna. So much work would normally have required all the energy of several scholars, especially if we consider that in each of his publishing endeavors Michelangelo met his deadlines punctually.

All this work did not prevent him from conducting intense personal research. Occasionally he would complain about the distractions, but in spite of his commitments he wrote several books and many essays. His production was indeed astounding in quantity and variety, counting several hundred titles (307 to be exact) written in several languages, including German and French, that spanned diverse areas of interest and periods. Although he occasionally worked on modern themes (an example is his early work *Il mito della Francia in Manzoni* [1974]), Picone was essentially a Romanist who focused on the medieval period, covering the wide area of Romance literatures, as clearly demonstrated in his indispensable anthology *Il racconto* (1985) as well as in numerous essays. His approach was comparative: he studied the influence of Old French and Provençal

literatures on Italian authors and the influence of Ovid on the Romance literatures in general. It would take too long to review the list of all his studies; it suffices to say that the earliest ones tend to focus on the pre-*Stilnovo* period, while the later ones privilege the *tre corone*, authors that Michelangelo studied intensely, especially from narratological and inter-textual perspectives. Boccaccio was the author best suited to these two approaches, and Picone's work on the *Decameron* will not soon be surpassed for his original insights on the function of the "cornice" and on the historical and rhetorical origins of the novella. His last volume to appear was *Boccaccio e la codificazione della novella: Letture del Decameron* (2008); a work on Boccaccio and medieval narrative was completed just before his death and is scheduled to appear in 2009.

The variety and vastness of his production necessitates that I limit my attention here to the essays on Dante, a field to which Picone devoted a sustained effort, leaving an unforgettable mark. In this field his organizational skills bore their greatest fruit. In 1996 he became coeditor (with Andrea Battistini) of *L'Alighieri*, a journal that he brought back to life after years of sleepy presence and irregular publication. He organized several conferences on Dante: at McGill, *Dante and the Medieval Tradition of Allegory* (1987); in Ascona, *Dante mito e poesia* (1997), and in Ravenna, *Gli ipotesi della Commedia* (2007) and *Le opere minori di Dante nella prospettiva della Commedia* (2008). He also published several collective volumes: *Dante e le forme dell'allegoresi* (1997), *Ovidius redivivus: Von Ovid zu Dante* (1994), and *Le rime di Dante* (1995). In collaboration with Johannes Bartschat, he collected the *Scritti danteschi* (1997), essays written by Giovanni Andrea Scartazzini, a great Dante scholar who spent much of his professional life in Switzerland. He was also *pars magna* in the organization of the International Dante Seminar, founded by Robert Hollander.

Picone's interest in Dante's work came at the beginning of his scholarly career; indeed, one of his earliest articles (1974) dealt with the problem of authorship of *Il Fiore*, and much of his work on Trecento authors gravitated around the figure of Dante. Quite early on he began focusing on the *Vita nuova*, producing a series of articles that dealt with Dante's original use of Troubadour themes and motives and theories on love. These studies later found an organic reworking in an influential book, *Vita nuova e tradizione romanza* (1979). The reading of the *libello* in the context of Romance traditions brought out some elements that remained constant in Picone's medieval studies: the poetry of the troubadours and their

notion of love in its religious dimension; the problem of autobiography in its poetical transfiguration; narratological strategies; the value of the allegorical mode and the meaning of ancient mythology in the Ovidian tradition; and the semiotic and intertextual approach. These elements recur throughout Picone's scholarship, whether he is studying Dante or Boccaccio or Petrarch. There is no question that Dante engaged Picone more than any other author; this is proved by the fact that a good one-fourth of his publications deal mostly with the *Comedy* but also with the *Rime* and the *Vita nuova*. The flow of these studies had no significant interruption from the initial years of his career to his last article, "Nota su Dante e i 'guidi' della 'Commedia'" (*L'Alighieri*, 2008). The traditional *lecturae* tend to prevail, but Picone often dealt with exegetical problems (clarifying difficult and controversial passages and allusions) and cultural aspects (mostly having to do with the Romance tradition or the classical one, especially the work of Ovid). The cantos he loved to read above all others were those whose main characters were troubadours or Italian poets (Folquet of Marseille, Bertran de Born or Arnaut Daniel, Guittone or Bonagiunta). Picone had a strong interest in and stimulating ideas on the notion of poetry and poetics held by medieval poets, and Dante was the poet who thought most profoundly on these problems, contextualizing them in the light of tradition and in the debates of his day. Picone always raised his intertextual findings to a level that could be defined as "philosophical" or cultural, because since he saw every detail of Dante's work as an expression of the poet's general commitment to the Truth—the Christian one, in its medieval and existential dimension—to be found and exposed and defended in the cultural debates of his time. This approach was the hallmark of Picone's Dante studies: it was his "critical" style, clearly at work even in his interpretations of Petrarch and Boccaccio. It was an approach that ran the risk of overreading, but Picone seldom fell into that trap: his intellectual control was so precise and his philological rigor always so vigilant that the results were consistently persuasive and engaging.

Michelangelo Picone was a perspicacious reader, gifted with a sound critical imagination, one that would *find* rather than *look* for significant critical problems; and he strengthened his interpretations with a learning that few scholars possess in such measure. His writing was elegant, never *corrido*, as is often the case with authors who write a great deal. His departure leaves us with this certain consolation: we can always return to the

pages he wrote, which are ever fresh with the energy and joy that accompanies original critical insight, so many pages where we can find learning and inspiration. That is the legacy of authentic scholarship at the highest level. This is the scholarship of Michelangelo Picone, the friend we sorely miss.

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American Dante Bibliography for 2008

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This bibliography is intended to include all publications on Dante (books, articles, translations, reviews) written by North American writers or published in North America in 2008 as well as reviews from foreign sources of books published in the United States and Canada. The listing of reviews is necessarily selective, especially in the case of studies bearing only peripherally on Dante. Items not recorded in the bibliographies for previous years are entered as addenda to the current list; items not identified in time for inclusion here will be added in future issues of the journal.

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The Dante Prize and the Charles Hall Grandgent Award

Since 1887 the Dante Society of America has offered an annual prize for the best student essay on a subject related to the life or works of Dante. The Dante Prize of five hundred dollars is offered for the best essay submitted by an undergraduate in any American or Canadian college or university, or by anyone not enrolled as a graduate student who has received the degree of A.B. or its equivalent within the past year. In addition, a prize of seven hundred and fifty dollars, the Charles Hall Grandgent Award, is offered for the best essay submitted by an American or Canadian student enrolled in any graduate program.

All submissions must be sent as e-mail attachments to the Dante Society at dsa@dantesociety.org. Undergraduate essays should be no longer than 5,000 words and graduate essays no longer than 7,000 words. The deadline for submission is June 30.

Each writer should provide a cover page (as the first page of the file) giving the writer's name, local, permanent and e-mail addresses, the title of the essay, the essay category, and the writer's institutional affiliation. The writer's name should not appear on the essay title page (to follow the cover page) or on any other page of the essay since the essays are submitted anonymously to the readers. Quotations from Dante's works should be cited in the original language, and the format of an essay should conform to either the Chicago or MLA Style Sheet guidelines.

Submissions will be judged by a special Committee of the Society. If it should be decided that none of the essays submitted deserves a full prize, the Society may award one prize to two contestants, each to receive one half of the prize, or it may make no award. The results will be announced in early autumn and published in the fall issue of the Society's *Newsletter* and in *Dante Studies*. While the essays remain the intellectual property of the writers, the submitted text will not be returned to authors.

Report of the Secretary

The 127th annual meeting of the Dante Society (and the 54th of the incorporated Dante Society of America) was held at the Carriage House of the Longfellow National Historic Site in Cambridge, Massachusetts, on Saturday, May 16, 2009. President **Giuseppe Mazzotta** called the meeting to order at 11:00 a.m.

President Mazzotta introduced Mr. **Jim Shea**, Manager of the Longfellow National Historic Site, who offered a few words of welcome to our group.

The minutes of the 126th Annual Meeting were read and approved.

After the business meeting, **President Mazzotta** chaired a panel titled *Future Directions in Dante Studies*. Participants **Heather Webb** (Ohio State University), **Filippo Naitana** (Fairfield University), **Susanna Barsella** (Fordham University), and **Justin Steinberg** (University of Chicago) spoke in succession.

The balloting in the Spring of 2009 resulted in the election to the Council of **Albert Ascoli** and **Victoria Kirkham** for a term of three years, and of the re-election of **Vincent Pollina** as Secretary-Treasurer for a term of one year. In the summer, **Todd Boli** was re-elected Vice-President for the year 2009–2010.

In the prize competition for 2008, the Dante Prize for the best undergraduate essay was awarded to **Aisha Woodward** of Bowdoin College for “‘*A piè del ponticello*’: Schism and Suspension in *Inferno* XXIX.” The Charles Hall Grandgent Award for the best essay by a graduate student went to **Stanley Levers** of Yale University for “The Ethics of Solomonic Verse in Dante’s *Paradiso*.” **Olivia Holmes** (Chair), **Arielle Saiber**, and **Susanna Barsella** served as judges.

The Dante Society met in conjunction with the 2008 MLA Annual Convention in San Francisco on Sunday, December 28, 2008. **Giuseppe Mazzotta** introduced **Theodore Cachey** (Notre Dame University), who spoke on “Cartographic Dante.”

The Society sponsored four sessions at the Forty-Fourth International Congress on Medieval Studies, held at Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, Michigan, May 7–10, 2009:

Dante I: Problems in the *Inferno*, **Fabian Alfie** (University of Arizona), Chair. **John Wager** (Triton College): “Why Mud? – Vegetal Images in Dante’s *Inferno*.” **Teresa Gualtieri-Clark**, (Independent Scholar, Bellevue, NE): “Mind the Gap: Dante, Virgil, and the *cammin risico*.” **Gabriella Baika** (Auburn University): “Coins and Words: The Interplay of Two (Forged) Semiotic Systems in the *Bolgia* of the Falsifiers.” **Alessandro Vettori** (Rutgers University): “Lucifer on the Stage: A Reading of *Inferno* XXXIV.”

Dante II: Perspectives on Dante’s *Paradise*, **Ann Meyer** (National Endowment for the Humanities and Claremont McKenna College), Chair. **Pina Palma** (Southern Connecticut State University): “Of Serpents and Doves: *Inferno* XXV and *Paradiso* XXV.” **Vincent Pollina** (Tufts University): “Dante’s Eagle: Time, Syntax, Eternity.” **Tamara Pollack** (DePauw University): “‘Come a raggio di sol’: The Vision of Theophanies in Dante’s *Cielo Stellato*.” **Francesco Aimerito** (Università degli Studi del Piemonte Orientale “Amedeo Avogadro”): “Medieval Law in Dante’s *Paradise*.”

Dante III: New Perspectives on the *Divine Comedy*, **Pina Palma** (Southern Connecticut State University), Chair. **Francesco Ciabattone** (Dalhousie University): “Musical Liturgy as Pharmakon in Dante’s *Purgatorio*.” **Marsha Daigle-Williamson** (Spring Arbor University): “The Apocryphal Book of Wisdom and the *Commedia*.” **V. Stanley Benfell** (Brigham Young University): “Pride and Aristotle in the *Commedia*.” **Filippo Naitana** (Fairfield University): “Archaeology of the Impossible: Dante and the Question of Happiness.”

Dante IV: Questions of Genre, Transmission, and Reception of Dante’s Works, **Christopher Kleinhenz** (University of Wisconsin–Madison), Chair. **Fabian Alfie** (University of Arizona): “The Conundrum of Genre: Dante’s *Doglia mi reca*.” **Jelena Todorovic** (Indiana University): “Dante’s *Vita Nova*: A Crossroads of Personal and Public, of Past and Future.” **Karl Fugelso** (Towson University): “Articulating Authority: Manuscript Layout as *Commedia* Response.” **Nicholas Havely** (University of York): “Dante in the Henrician Reformation.”

Dante Studies Style Sheet

Guidelines for Authors

[7.31.10]

Dante Studies is the official annual of the Dante Society of America, which was founded in 1881 by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, James Russell Lowell, and Charles Eliot Norton (the Society's first three presidents) and others. Like the Dante Society as a whole, *Dante Studies* is dedicated to the furtherance of the study of the works of Dante Alighieri. Its editorial board welcomes submissions, in English or Italian, on all subjects connected with Dante's life, works, influence, and critical reception.

General Remarks

For distinctive treatment of words and phrases, grammar, punctuation, style, and matters of bibliographic citation, consult the *Chicago Manual of Style* (parenthetical numbers below refer to the 15th edition). The following notes highlight major style issues and clarify *DS* preferences where *CMS* offers choices or where *DS* practice deviates from *CMS*. Authors are strongly encouraged to use inclusive language when possible.

Abbreviations

Do not use abbreviations (except parenthetically) in run of text.

In notes, avoid *loc. cit.* and *op. cit.* Use *ibid.* only to refer the reader to a single bibliographic item cited in the immediately preceding note. If more than one work is cited in the previous note, an abbreviated (author-short title) citation should be used.

Capitalization

Certain terms designating historical, political, or cultural movements or periods are traditionally capitalized (e.g., High Middle Ages, the Renaissance, the Risorgimento); many such descriptive terms, however, need not be capitalized (e.g., antiquity, the quattrocento) (*CMS* 8.77–8.80). Capitalize adjectives derived from proper nouns that designate cultural movements and styles (e.g., Romanesque) (*CMS* 8.85); otherwise, such terms may be set lowercase.

Capitalize specific Dantean concepts (e.g., Purgatory), but do not capitalize units of topographical structure (e.g., ninth bolgia of the eighth circle).

Capitalize religious and theological concepts (e.g., the Annunciation).

Generic terms designating sections of poems, plays, and the like should be capitalized only when used with figures to cite particular sections (e.g., Canto 23, Book 4 of the *Aeneid*, the eleventh canto). Note that this opposes the recommendation of CMS 8.194, which specifies that such terms be universally lowercase.

Capitalize permanent epithets and personal titles that function as part of the name or can be used in direct address. Titles occurring in apposition that function descriptively (and would not occur in direct address) should not be capitalized. Titles used alone or following a name should be lowercased in run of text (but capitalized in acknowledgments and the like). (CMS 8.21–38)

the bishop of Paris, William of Auvergne

Doctor Angelicus

Fra Remigio de' Girolami, lector of theology at Santa Maria Novella

King George III, *but* the king of England

the Master

Pope Innocent III, the pope

The prefect Acerbo Falseroni of Florence

secretary-treasurer Vincent Pollina (*but* Address correspondence to
Vincent Pollina, Secretary-Treasurer, The Dante Society of
America)

Capitalize all principal words in French names of buildings (e.g., Opéra-Comique). In the names of associations, institutions, exhibitions, organizations, and the like, capitalize the first substantive only (e.g., la Légion d'honneur). Note that translated names follow English conventions for capitalization; for example, Exposition universelle internationale is rendered as Universal Exposition.

Citations

Archives and Libraries

Use full names for first instance of a given institution, though sigla may be abbreviated:

Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale (= Bibl. Naz.) (e.g., Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, MS Magl. [Magliabechiana] 165, fol. 1r)

London, British Library (e.g., London, British Library, MS Add. 19587)

Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France (= Bib. nat.); Bib. nat. MS Lat. 6064; MS Arabe 384

Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Vat. Lat. 4072

Edition-Independent Identifying Numbers

Short citations to works by Dante are included parenthetically in running text (and may be used in notes as well): titles—spelled out in text (e.g., *Epistole* 13.10)—are abbreviated as below, with arabic identifying section numbers separated by periods.

Conv. 4.24

Epist. 13.10

Inf. 31.112–14

Mon. 3.4.12

Par. 33.131, 137

Purg. 5.114

VN 4.5

DVE 1.2.4

Works by other authors may be cited similarly after the complete title has been introduced. (For example, Vergil's *Aeneid*, referenced in the text, might be followed by a subsequent parenthetical *Aen.* 1.725.) A single reference to a classical or medieval text however, should not be abbreviated.

Note: do not use a definite article in to cantica of the *Commedia* (e.g., “In *Inferno*, Dante).

Scripture

Parenthetical references to scripture should use the “traditional” abbreviations (e.g., Gen. 1:14–19) (*CMS* 17.247, 15.51–15.53).

Secondary Literature

There is no need to include a works list in addition to endnotes; however, authors must indicate facts of publication as completely as possible, including, for example, edition of works cited, series information, and so forth. For place of publication, use English-language equivalents for foreign city names (e.g., Florence, Rome, Vatican, *not* Firenze, Roma, Vaticano). If more than one place is given on the title page, use only the first. After an initial citation, abbreviate to author plus short title for subsequent mentions of the same work.

Use headline style capitalization for titles of English-language books and articles. Within titles, hyphenation of compounds should follow the “traditional” rules noted in *CMS* (8.170).

In general, citations of works in languages other than English may hew to *CMS*’s simple rule for sentence-style capitalization (10.3): “first word of title and subtitle and all proper nouns.” (This applies to titles of French periodicals as well as to titles of articles and books.) For German titles, see *CMS* 10.43. Note that Latin also capitalizes proper adjectives. Punctuation of foreign-language titles may be modified slightly to accord with American practice (e.g., change periods to colons before subtitles).

Contra academicos
De civitate Dei
Storia della letteratura italiana

Some journals follow their own convention:

Studi Danteschi
Lettere Italiane
Quaderni d’Italianistica
Lettere Classensi

Titles within titles. In article citations, titles may be italicized as usual (e.g., “*In Omnibus Viis Tuis*: Compline in the Valley of the Rulers”). Within italicized titles the embedded title may be enclosed in quotation marks. If embedded titles are clearly represented through capitalization, quotation marks are not necessary.

La escatología musulmana en la Divina Comedia.

John Kleiner, *Mismapping the Underworld: Daring and Error in Dante's "Comedy,"* *Figurae: Reading Medieval Culture* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1994), 153 n. 33. [Note in this example that no comma comes between the page number and the note number (CMS 17.140).]

Do not italicize an initial "the" in the names of periodicals (the *New York Times*).

In indicating pages, *p.* or *pp.* is omitted unless necessary for clarity. Inclusive page ranges should be compressed according to the scheme summarized below (under "Numbers").

For Internet citations, do not enclose URLs in angle brackets.

In general, spell out series names in full; however, such well-known abbreviations as *PL* and *PMLA* need not be expanded.

Sample note forms:

EDITIONS

Dante Alighieri, *Commedia*, vol. 1 *Inferno*. Ed. Anna Maria Chiavacci Leonardi. (Milan: Mondadori, 1991).

Gregory, *Moralia in Job* 4.1 (*PL* 75.637–41).

ARTICLES

Charles T. Davis, "Dante's Vision of History," *Dante Studies* 118 (2000): 243–59.

Paul Renucci, "Dante et les mythes du Millenium," *Revue des études italiennes*, n.s., 11 (1965): 393–421. [French journal titles follow sentence-style capitalization]

BOOKS/ /MONOGRAPHS

Helga Scheible, *Die Gedichte in der "Consolatio Philosophiae" des Boethius*, Bibliothek der klassischen Altertumswissenschaften, n.F., 46 (Heidelberg: Carl Winter, 1972).

Teodolina Barolini, *Dante's Poets: Textuality and Truth in the Comedy* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1984), 212–15.

REFERENCE WORKS

The Dante Encyclopedia, s.v. "Forese."

Italics

Foreign words and phrases not in general usage (*Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary* may be considered a starting point in this regard) should be italicized (e.g., *canzoni*).

Quotations

The *Commedia* is to be quoted according to a standard Italian critical edition of the text. Those of Giorgio Petrocchi (Milan: Mondadori, 1966–67; 2nd ed., 1994) or Federico Sanguineti (Florence: SISMEL, 2001) are currently recommended.

Use a word space on both sides of the solidus (e.g., “la quale è sì ’invilita, / che ogn’ om par che mi dica: ‘Io t’abandono,’”).

The journal does not include translations of Dante’s Italian texts unless there is a special *ad locum* reason. Extracts from Latin texts, however, should be translated in run of text, with the original text given in notes.

Numbers

In run of text, spell out one through ninety-nine and large round numbers. In sentences including numbers both greater and less than ninety-nine, use figures. Do not use roman numerals in citations.

Dates should be expressed in the form *month day, year*. Decades should be written out in full in figures or as words (the 1330s, *or* the thirties, *but not* the ’30s).

Spell out designations for centuries and unit modifiers composed thereof:

the fourteenth century; fourteenth-century works

the early/late fourteenth century; late fourteenth-century works

the mid to late fourteenth century; mid to late fourteenth-century works

the mid-1330s, the mid to late 1330s

Inclusive ranges should be compressed according to the scheme offered in CMS 9.64, which may be summarized as follows. Note, however, that for life dates both numbers should be given in full (e.g., 1313–1375, *not* 1313–75).

- The first number is 1–99 or 100, 200, and so on: the second number is given in full (e.g., 4–29, 100–102).
- The first number is 101–109, 201–209, and so on: only the changed element of the second number is given (e.g., 102–3)
- The first number is 110–199, 210–299, and so on: the second number uses two or more digits (e.g., 1234–37, 1290–1321)

Punctuation

Do not use a comma after a short introductory phrase, unless a pause is strongly implied or readability would be adversely affected otherwise:

Thus Dante invites the reader to scrutinize . . .

In 1239 he wrote . . .

In the second book of *Monarchia* Dante . . .

Indeed, he did quite the opposite. . . .

First of all, Dante's admirers . . .

Do use the series comma: *Inferno*, *Purgatorio*, and *Paradiso*.

Do not separate a restrictive term from its neighbor with a comma, but do use a comma to set off nonrestrictive elements.

"In his treatise *Contra falsos ecclesie professores*, which was written about 1305 . . ." (no comma after title, but comma before nonrestrictive clause)

"In the second work written in the 1340s that was composed for his new patron . . ." (there were *two* works written for the new patron, both in the 1340s)

Spelling

Use American spelling. *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary* may be considered an authority in matters of spelling and hyphenation: where alternative spellings for the same term are given, use the main entry (e.g., "fueled," *not* "fuelled"; "toward" *not* "towards"). For personal names, consult *Webster's New Biographical Dictionary* or the Name Authority Headings of the Library of Congress (<http://authorities.loc.gov/>).

For possessives of singular nouns ending in *s*, including proper nouns, add an apostrophe and an *s*, observing the exceptions noted in *CMS* 7.20–7.22.

With regard to hyphenation, *DS* favors closing compounds that sometimes appear hyphenated (e.g., preexisting). If uncertain about whether or not to spell a term with or without a hyphen or closed up, check *Merriam-Webster's* first to verify the status of a given term, then apply the principles concerning hyphenation set forth in *CMS* 7.82–7.90. Temporary compounds that as a unit function adjectivally before a noun (unit modifiers) should be hyphenated (e.g., “she found herself engaged in a decision-making process,” *but* “decision making was not her favorite task”).

